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The Future of Economics and Management Education in Malaysia

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Executive Summary

Historically, the teaching of Economics in Malaysia began at the University of Malaya (UM) in 1959, as a specialisation in the social sciences degree. The programme evolved into the human resource training required for national development in 1970s and 1980s. The nation's needs were met by the programmes offered by Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), and the then Agriculture University (UPM).

While providing solid grounding in macro- and microeconomics as well as quantitative skills, the Economics and Business Management programmes were general in nature, thus providing the requisite skills for graduates to become planners, analysts, and managers in public and private sectors. Business Management, however, made headway in tandem with the robust growth of Malaysia's private sector in 1980s. As a result, more public institutes were established to offer Business Management courses at diploma and undergraduate levels.

The complexity of challenges faced by post-industrialised organisations in advanced countries during 1970s and 1980s contributed to the development of the Economics and Business Management disciplines. Both fields evolved to include the realities of the practical world, where knowledge of a single field had become insufficient to adequately solve problem. After all, problems are frequently multi-dimensional and therefore require a multi-pronged approach gathered from multiple bodies of knowledge.

A main strategic thrust outlined in the National Higher Education Strategic Plan lays out the foundation to promote quality teaching and learning beyond 2020, to assist IHLs in the development of competent human capital that is capable of contributing to Malaysia's national goals. To achieve this aspiration, the Council of Deans of Economics and Business Faculties were tasked with assessing the current Economics and Business Management programmes offered by the Malaysian Institutions of Higher Learning (IHLs), as well as recommending necessary measures to ensure excellent programmes are being offered.

This study covers several broad areas, which are:

1. An analysis of the Economics and Business Management programmes in public universities in Malaysia.
2. A comparison with selected foreign universities.
3. The perception of students and parents on the programmes.

4. Employers' perception of the Economics and Business Management graduates.
5. Proposed measures for improvement.

The following strategies were used in conducting the study:

1. Questionnaire surveys to parents of current students, to seek their views on the Economics and Business Management programmes curricula.
2. A tracer study for graduating students of the Economics and Business Management programmes on their views regarding the programmes' curricula.
3. Focus group discussions with several industry members to solicit their views on the Economics and Business Management programmes as a whole.

Based on the findings of these surveys, it has become clear that the evolution of the twin fields of Economics and Business Management have indelibly impacted the way these programmes are organised, with new courses regularly being incorporated into the curricula offered by Malaysian public universities. The Economics and Business Management programmes offered by Malaysian public IHLs at the undergraduate level typically span 3 to 4 years, while the Bachelor of Economics programmes usually involve specialisations in various fields (including financial economics and hospitality).

However, the Bachelor of Economics programmes offered by UM, USM, and UKM present a unique value proposition. Economics students of UM, for instance, are not just taught basic macro- and microeconomics as well as quantitative skills – they are further given the option to take electives from related groupings (e.g. financial and monetary economics). Moreover, they were also given the chance to gain exposure to broad-based knowledge. Students are also required to take courses like sociology, politics, and law.

This teaching approach is mirrored by several foreign universities sampled for this study, namely London School of Economics (LSE), UK, Chulalongkorn University (Thailand), and the National University of Singapore (NUS). Meanwhile, Princeton University and Harvard University provide students with a more holistic education through its BA Programmes: general requirements for first-year students of both institutes include taking electives in a number of subjects, (e.g. Epistemology and Cognition). Oxford University, Cambridge University, University of Melbourne, and Monash University each offer undergraduate curricula that are designed to introduce students to a common core of knowledge which can subsequently be extended. Suffice to say that all these foreign universities demonstrated strong emphasis on providing students with well rounded education and flexibility in course selection.

If we are to generate a new kind of graduate who excels in critical thinking, problem solving, and spoken and written communications, we must ensure that the curricula offered by Malaysian public IHLs is contemporary, student-centred, and based on problem-solving and critical thinking. Outlined below are some of the recommendations formulated from the surveys conducted in the course of this study:

a) Academic specialisations: The current practice by Malaysian higher education providers of encouraging students to pursue academic specialisations at an undergraduate level must be reviewed. Undergraduates would benefit greatly from a more holistic academic experience, as opposed to a rigid system of learning that encourages students to focus on accumulating extensive theoretical knowledge at the risk of neglecting the development of other equally critical "soft skills".

b) Integration of a writing component in existing curricula: Many graduate students enter their programmes with basic writing capabilities and a fundamental ability to understand and summarise journal articles. However, some students are not successful writers, which may thwart their critical thinking skills. It is recommended that a writing component be integrated into the existing Economics and Business Management curricula. Not only will this improve students' writing as a life skill, but it will also yield practical consequences reaching far beyond the academic world.

c) Introduction of industry internships: An urgent need exists to incorporate industry internships into the existing curricula offered. This will help students to bridge the divide between classroom-taught concepts and theories and their real world applications. Graduates would certainly gain some much-needed experience and exposure through short-term compulsory industrial attachments. Not only will they be exposed to a real working environment, they will also be able to apply what they have learnt in a real life setting.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

In 2009, the Council of Deans of Economics and Business Faculties – led by the then chairperson Professor Norma Mansor, the Dean of the Faculty of Economics and Administration, University of Malaya – met in Kota Kinabalu (UMS-Sabah) to deliberate on and address pertinent issues related to the Economics and Business Management courses currently taught in Malaysian public Institutions of Higher Learning (IHLs). Arising from this meeting, a working committee was set up by the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) to examine the ways in which these programmes could be reviewed and strengthened.

In line with the committee's mandate, this report aims to present a review and analysis of Bachelor of Economics and Business Management programmes in selected public universities in Malaysia, comparing these against similar programmes offered elsewhere in the country and abroad.

The review, analysis and comparisons were done based on the following premises:

1. Feedback from the industry, the market, and professional bodies indicate the marketplace is getting very volatile, and that Bachelor of Economics and Business Management programmes require a complete revision.
2. Compliance in the form of a newly instituted government agency, which is mandated to monitor the quality of Learning Outcomes-related programmes and courses offered by local Institutions of Higher Learning (IHLs).
3. Emerging competition from foreign-based IHLs operating in Malaysia, as well as our ability to attract potential foreign students into tertiary education.

1.2 Objectives

The main objective of this study is to examine the Economics and Business Management courses currently taught in Malaysian public IHLs, for the purpose of making recommendations to MOHE. It is hoped that in the long term, the

recommendations of the working committee will contribute greatly to ensure that future graduates will be better equipped to meet the ever-changing demands of the job market.

This report aims to:

1. Review and assess the Economics and Business Management courses offered by public universities.
2. Present MOHE with a comprehensive list of suggestions on revisions that ought to be made to the Economics and Business Management curricula.
3. Identify and suggest different types of training, development of teaching and skills in the field of Economics and Business Management in public IHLs.
4. Identify and suggest methods and possible joint programmes between both public and private IHLs to facilitate the sharing of resources, facilities and expertise.
5. Present recommendations to MOHE regarding possible partnerships between IHLs and industry, particularly in the areas of Research & Development and industrial training opportunities for lecturers and students.

CHAPTER 2

Methodology

2.1 Introduction

A main strategic thrust outlined in the National Higher Education Strategic Plan lays out the foundation to promote quality teaching and learning beyond 2020, to assist IHLs in the development of competent human capital that is capable of contributing to Malaysia's national goals. The desired outcomes of the strategic thrust are as follows:

1. Critical thinking, communication skills, proficiency in English and enhanced IT skills must form the common foundation for all graduates, regardless of their chosen disciplines. These new areas of focus will be integrated into a compulsory curriculum that runs concurrently with degree programmes at all IHLs.
2. All lecturers are expected to demonstrate scholarship in their fields of specialisation, and to demonstrate professionalism and competence in their ability to teach.

This chapter sets out the methodology adopted for the study. The following strategies were used in conducting the study:

1. Questionnaire surveys to parents of current students, to seek their views on the Economics and Business Management programmes.
2. A tracer study via the MOHE graduate survey to graduating students of the Economics and Business Management programmes on their views regarding the programmes' curricula.
3. Focus group discussions with several industry members to solicit their views on the Economics and Business Management programmes as a whole.

2.2 Sampling Design

Parental Perspective Survey

The sampling technique adopted for the parental survey was done through convenient sampling. The students in the faculty of Economics and Business Management were selected conveniently and asked to hand over the questionnaire booklets to their respective parents. The completed questionnaires were then returned to the teaching staff.

Graduates' Survey

To collect data for the graduates' survey, a tracer study was conducted on all Economics and Business Management programme graduates from several local public universities.

Focus Group Discussion

The Focus Group Discussion comprised personnel from several GLCs and private organisations – the primary employers of graduates from Economics and Business Management programmes. Convenient sampling was also adopted in identifying members of the Focus Group.

2.3 Instrument

The instrument used for the study was questionnaire surveys that were distributed to two groups of respondents: the parents of current students, and Economics and Business Management programme graduates from public universities.

2.3.1 Questionnaire for Parents

The questionnaire for parents consisted of three sections. The first section was the demographic profile of the parents which included the following:

1. Education level.
2. Age.
3. Employment.
4. Gross monthly household income.
5. Household size.
6. The number of children studying in local public IHLs.

The second section measured the parents' attitudes toward the programme in which their children were enrolled, and the last section measured parents' satisfaction toward the Economics and Business Management programmes in local public IHLs.

To gauge the parents' views on the Economics and Business Management programmes at local public IHLs, the respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction using a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 being 'very unsatisfied' and 4 being 'very satisfied' on the following items:

1. Information relating to the programme of study as a whole.
2. Ability of the programme of study to equip students with knowledge for future employment.

3. Quality of programme of study in the local public IHL.
4. General perception of the public on the Economics and Business Management programmes in the local public IHL

CHAPTER 3

Courses Offered by Economics and Business Management Programmes

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the general overview of selected Malaysian public IHLs and foreign universities which offer Economics and Business Management programmes. The focus is on Economics and Business Management programmes in Malaysia, comparatively analysed against similar programmes offered by selected foreign universities. Factors being analysed are the programme structure, credit hours, and the duration of the programme.

The samples of local universities for the study were Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Malaysia (UIAM), Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS), University of Malaya (UM), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM),Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS), Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) and Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM). The selected foreign universities were the London School of Economics (LSE), UK, Chulalongkorn University (Thailand), the National University of Singapore (NUS), Oxford University, Cambridge University, Princeton University, Harvard University, University of Melbourne, and Monash University.

The past two decades saw the establishment of more public universities in Malaysia. To date, there are 20 public universities, with two-thirds of these are offering Economics and Business Management programmes. Many universities now offer both undergraduate and post-graduate training, research and consultancies developed to meet the current and emerging needs of various sectors across the Malaysian economy. Therein, however, lies the challenge.

As Malaysia prepares to undergo a massive transformation into a high-income economy, local universities are now faced with the task of moulding future generations of human capital into a workforce that is dynamic, innovative, and capable of competing on a global scale. But before this can be achieved, local universities must first acknowledge that their function now transcends simply being ‘education providers’ – they must take on the responsibility of providing the kind of academic experience that will give graduates the knowledge, skills, competitive advantage needed to thrive in the new economy.

3.2 Descriptive comparison of Bachelor of Economics programmes from selected public IHLs in Malaysia

TABLE 3.1. Programme structure (number of credits or units)

	UM		UKM		UPM		UUM		UIAM		USM	
Programme	BEc	BBA	BEc	BBA	BEc	BBA	BEc	BBA	BEc	BBA	BEc	B of Mgt
Duration (years)	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	3	3	3
University Core	15	15	20	20	15	15	22	22	20	20		15
Faculty Core / Major	18	68	28	89	18	49	95	91	36	36		70
Programme Core	53		66	15	51	27			36	33		
Electives / Minor	21	24	6	6	21	15	3	15	36	39		20
Total	107	107	120	120	105	106	120	128	128	128		108

Table 3.1 compares the Economics and Business Management programmes offered by University of Malaya, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Universiti Pertanian Malaysia, Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Malaysia, and Universiti Sains Malaysia. The Bachelor of Economics degree offered in Malaysia generally covers a duration of 3 years, except for UIAM which offers a 4 year programme. The degree programme for Bachelor of Business Management covers a duration of 3 years. Out of the local universities sampled for the study, the minimum 120 credit requirement set by the Malaysian Qualification Agency is currently met by only UKM and UIAM. Table 3.2 and Table 3.3 in Appendix 2 compare the Economics and Business Management programmes offered by Public IHLs, with course details obtained from their respective websites and/or students' prospectuses.

In terms of specialisation, Malaysian universities awarded general degrees in Economics, with the exception of UPM in 8 areas, UMS in 3 areas, and UNIMAS in 2 areas of specialisation. However, most Malaysian universities do not offer specialisation for the Bachelor of Business Management degree, with the exception of UM in 3 areas, UPM in 8 areas and UMS in 1 area.

Islamic and Asian Civilisation is the core course for all Malaysian public IHLs, with the exception of UIAM which replaces the course with Islam, Knowledge & Civilisation.

3.3 Comparison of Malaysian Public IHLs and Selected Foreign Universities

TABLE 3.2. Programme structure comparisons between Malaysian Universities and selected Foreign Universities

UNIVERSITY	UNIVERSITIES IN MALAYSIA	LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS, UNITED KINGDOM	NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE	UNIVERSITY OF CHULALONGKORN, THAILAND
Programme	Bachelor of Economics	Bachelor of Science in Economics	Bachelor of Science in Economics	Bachelor of Economics
Length	3-4 years	3 years	4 years	4 years
Specialisation	Offered by some universities	3 Specialisations	Single Major (or Double Major)	9 Fields
University Courses	4-12 courses	-	20 Modular Credits	15 courses
Faculty Core	3 -15 courses	4 Foundation Units	12 Modular Credits	22 courses
Course core	7- 19 courses	5 Further Units	100 Modular Credits	7 courses
Elective	2 – 14 courses	3 Selection Units	28 Credits	2 courses
Industrial Training/ Academic writing	Mixture	Courses / Research Project	Exchange Programme	Research Project/ Workshop
Total Credit	103 - 128 credits	12 Units	160 Modular Credits	141 credits
System	Semester	Term	Semester	Semester

From Table 3.2, study durations adopted by the sample foreign universities are similar to those in Malaysian universities (i.e. 3 years or 4 years). LSE offers 3 year programmes in BSc Economics, BSc Econometrics and Mathematical Economics, and BSc Economics with Economics History. The Chulalongkorn BEc is similar to the BSc Economics offered by NUS, in that it requires 4 years (8 semesters) to complete.

The programme structure varies between these universities, with LSE adopting units, NUS adopting modular credits, and Chulalongkorn adopting credits. It is also interesting to note that the sample foreign universities provide exchange programmes or research projects in place of industrial training. All

universities have adopted semester systems, with the exception of LSE which utilises a term system.

A more comprehensive overview of the different programme structures can be found in Appendix 3.

3.4 Conclusion

The following points set out possible areas of improvement for the current Economics and Business Management curricula offered by Malaysian higher education providers. These suggestions are based on comparative analysis against similar programmes offered by selected foreign universities.

3.4.1 Review of Undergraduate Specialisation

The current practice by Malaysian higher education providers of encouraging students to pursue academic specialisations at an undergraduate level must be reviewed. Graduates – particularly undergraduates – would benefit greatly from a more holistic academic experience, as opposed to a rigid system of learning that encourages students to focus on accumulating extensive theoretical knowledge at the risk of neglecting the development of other equally critical "soft skills".

Princeton University, for example, strongly emphasises a more holistic education through its BA Programme. General requirements for first-year students include taking electives in a number of subjects, ranging from Epistemology and Cognition to Social Analysis and Foreign Language. A similar system is practiced in Harvard University through its B.A (Economics) programme. Equally worthy of note is that Oxford University, Cambridge University, University of Melbourne, and Monash University each offers undergraduate curricula that are designed to introduce students to a common core of knowledge which can subsequently be extended.

3.4.2 Integration of a Writing Component in Existing Curricula

Many graduate students enter their programmes with basic writing capabilities and a fundamental ability to understand and summarise journal articles. However, some students are not successful writers, which may thwart their critical thinking skills.

More importantly, employers consistently name written and spoken language proficiency as a prerequisite for prospective recruits. However, these are the very same areas of dissatisfaction identified by the graduate tracer study (Table 4.22) participants.

It is recommended that a writing component be integrated into the existing Economics and Business Management curricula. Not only will this improve students' writing as a life skill, but it will also yield practical consequences reaching far beyond the academic world.

3.4.3 Introduction of Industry Internships

An urgent need exists to incorporate industry internships into the existing curricula offered. This will help students to bridge the divide between classroom-taught concepts and theories and their real world applications.

Graduates would certainly gain some much-needed experience and exposure through short-term compulsory industrial attachments. Not only will they be exposed to a real working environment, they will also be able to apply what they have learnt in a real life setting.

CHAPTER 4

Results and Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results obtained from several surveys conducted for this study. The results obtained are from the three types of surveys: a Questionnaire survey on parents, a MOHE Graduate Survey, and a Focus Group Discussion (FGD).

4.2 Parents' Perspective

A set of questionnaires were distributed to 200 parents to gauge their views on the Economics and Business Management programmes undertaken by their children, who are currently studying in selected public IHLs.

4.2.1 Demographic Characteristics of the Parents

Of the 200 questionnaires distributed, a total of 111 usable responses were analysed. From the collected data – as shown in Table 4.1 – almost 90% of the parents are between 41 to 60 years of age, and close to 11% are over 60 years of age. Almost 60% of the parents are from a monthly income group of between RM 1,000 to RM 6,000; about 34% are earning less than RM 1,000 monthly; and only 6% have a monthly income of more than RM 6,000.

In terms of household size, 61% of the respondents have 4 to 6 members in their family; 23% have more than 7 members; and the remaining 16% have between 1 to 3 members. The data also indicates that almost 64% of the parents have only one child studying in Public IHLs, with 57% from this group having a child enrolled in the Economics programme. The remaining 43% are parents whose children are in the Business Management programme.

Table 4.1 also indicates that in terms of education level, about 15% of the parents have tertiary education qualification; 61% have secondary school certificates; and the remaining 24% are primary school leavers.

TABLE 4.1. Demographic Profile of Respondents

	VARIABLE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Age	<40	1	0.9
	41- 50	44	39.6
	51- 60	53	47.8
	>60	13	11.7
Employment	government sector	18	16.2
	private sector	26	23.4
	self employed	40	36.0
	pensioner/unemployed	27	24.3
Monthly income	<RM1000	38	34.2
	RM 1001-RM 2000	44	39.7
	RM2001-RM3000	15	13.5
	RM3001-RM6000	7	6.3
	>RM6000	7	6.3
Household size	1-3	18	16.2
	4-6	68	61.3
	7-10	23	20.7
	>11	2	1.8
No. of children studying in PHIs	1	73	65.8
	2	28	25.2
	3	8	7.2
	4	1	.9
	5	1	.9
Programme Enrolled	Economics	63	56.8
	Business Management/ administration	48	43.2
Parents' Education Level	Primary school	26	23.4
	Lower secondary school	34	30.6
	Upper secondary school	34	30.6
	Diploma	7	6.3
	Bachelors degree	8	7.2
	Masters or PhD	2	1.8

4.2.2 Parental Preferred Programmes

The result set out in Table 4.2 indicates that 52% of the parents prefer their children to be enrolled in either the Economics or Business Management programme. The result also indicates that about 23% of the parents prefer their children to be enrolled in the Education or Teaching programme, rather than the Economics or Business Management Programme. Other popular parental preferred programmes were Accounting (12%), and professional programmes such as Medicine and Law (4%).

TABLE 4.2. Parental Preferred Programmes

PROGRAMME	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Basic sciences	1	0.9
Medical/dentistry	4	3.6
Education/teaching	25	22.5
Religious studies	3	2.7
Accounting	13	11.7
Law	4	3.6
Social sciences	3	2.7
Economics & Business Management	58	52.3

Table 4.3 reveals that 55% of the 111 parents surveyed reported their children are currently pursuing programmes of their choice. Among the parents with children enrolled in Bachelor in Economics programmes, 50.8% agreed that this is their preferred programme while 49.2% disagree. However, about 60% of parents with children enrolled in Bachelor in Business Management programmes agreed that it is their preferred programme for their children. This implies that more Business and Business Management students are taking programmes of their parents' choice.

TABLE 4.3. Programme taken by your child as a preferred programme

PROGRAMME	PROGRAMME TAKEN BY YOUR CHILD YOUR PREFERRED PROGRAMME			
	NO		YES	
	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Economics	31	49.2%	32	50.8%
Business Management	19	39.6%	29	60.4%
Total	50	45.0%	61	55.0%

4.2.3 Parents' Perception on the Economics and Business Management Programmes

The result presented in Table 4.4 indicates that overall, more than 85% of parents are satisfied with all aspects of the programmes undertaken by their children. *Quality of study programmes in Public IHLs* is rated highest.

TABLE 4.4. Parents' perception on the Economics and Business Management Programmes

PERCEPTIONS	UNSATISFIED		SATISFIED	
	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Information relating to the programme of study as a whole	12	10.8	99	89.2
Performance of your child in the programme	11	9.9	100	90.1
Ability of programme of study to equip knowledge for future employment	15	13.5	96	86.5
Quality of programme of study in PHIs	10	9	101	91
General perception of public on the Economics and Business Management programmes in PHIs	15	13.5	96	86.5

4.2.4 Encouragement for Further Studies

In the survey, the respondents were asked whether they would encourage their child to further his/her studies in the programme he/she is currently enrolled in. The result presented in Table 4.5 reveals that almost 80% of parents agreed they would encourage their children to further their studies in the same programme.

TABLE 4.5 Encouragement for Further Studies in Economics and Business Management

PROGRAMMES	ENCOURAGE CHILDREN TO FURTHER STUDIES IN PROGRAMME TAKEN NOW					
	NO		DOES NOT MATTER		YES	
	FREQ.	PCT	FREQ.	PCT	FREQ.	PCT
Economics	1	1.6%	13	20.6%	49	77.8%
Business Management	3	6.3%	7	14.6%	38	79.2%
Total	4	3.6%	20	18.0%	87	78.4%

4.2.5 Employment Sectors' Preference After Studies

Table 4.6 below sets out the employment sectors preferred by parents for their children after completion of their studies. A majority of the parents would like their children to work in the Public Sector (64 %). The remaining 22% and 14% prefer their children to work in the Private Sector, or to be Entrepreneurs or Self-employed.

TABLE 4.6 Sectors preferred to be employed after studies

PROGRAMMES	SECTORS PREFERRED FOR YOUR CHILD TO BE EMPLOYED AFTER STUDIES					
	PUBLIC SECTOR		PRIVATE SECTOR		ENTREPRENEUR/ SELF-EMPLOYED	
	FREQ.	PCT	FREQ.	PCT	FREQ.	PCT
Economics	44	69.8%	12	19%	7	11.1%
Business Management	27	56.3%	12	25%	9	18.8%
Total	71	64%	24	21.6%	16	14.4%

4.3. Tracer Study[1]

The following analyses are based on nationwide annual graduate survey data by the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE). The focus of the analysis is on the Economics and Business Management Graduates.

4.3.1 Profile of First Degree Economics and Business Management Graduates

Figure 4.1 shows the distribution of first degree Economics and Business Management graduates for 2008 and 2009. Of the 4,375 first degree Business Management and Economics graduates in 2008, 2,656 or 60.7% are Business Management graduates, while the remaining 1,719 or 39.3% are graduates in Economics. The total number of Business Management and Economics graduates is slightly higher in 2009 (Figure 4.1).

1. Tracer study is a National online survey on graduates upon graduation conducted by Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE).

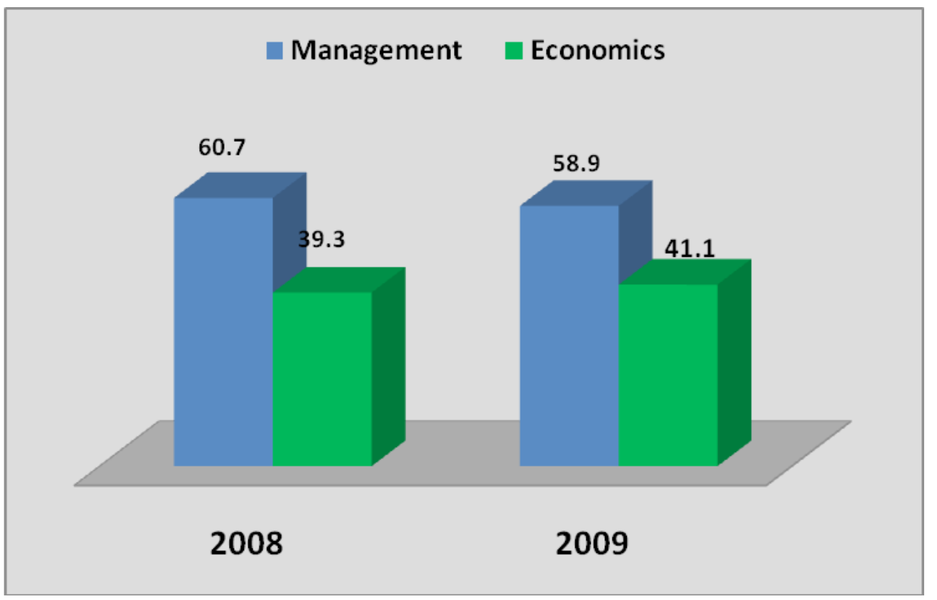

FIGURE 4.1. Percentage distribution of First Degree Business Management and Economics Graduates By Gender for 2008 and 2009

The percentage of female first degree graduates is markedly higher than those of males for both years, with an approximate ratio of 1:2. For example, 75.3% of the first degree Business Management graduates for the year 2009 were females and 24.7% were males. This is compared to the Economics graduates, of which 72.8% were females and 25.7% were males, as shown in Table 4.7 and Figure 4.2.

TABLE 4.7. Percentage distribution of First Degree Business Management and Economics Graduates by Gender for 2008 and 2009

GENDER	2008			2009		
	BUSINESS MANAGEMENT	ECONOMICS	TOTAL	BUSINESS MANAGEMENT	ECONOMICS	TOTAL
	N=2656	N=1719	N=4375	N=3139	N = 2190	N=5329
Male	25.7	29.3	27.0	24.7	27.2	25.7
Female	74.5	70.7	73.0	75.3	72.8	74.3
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

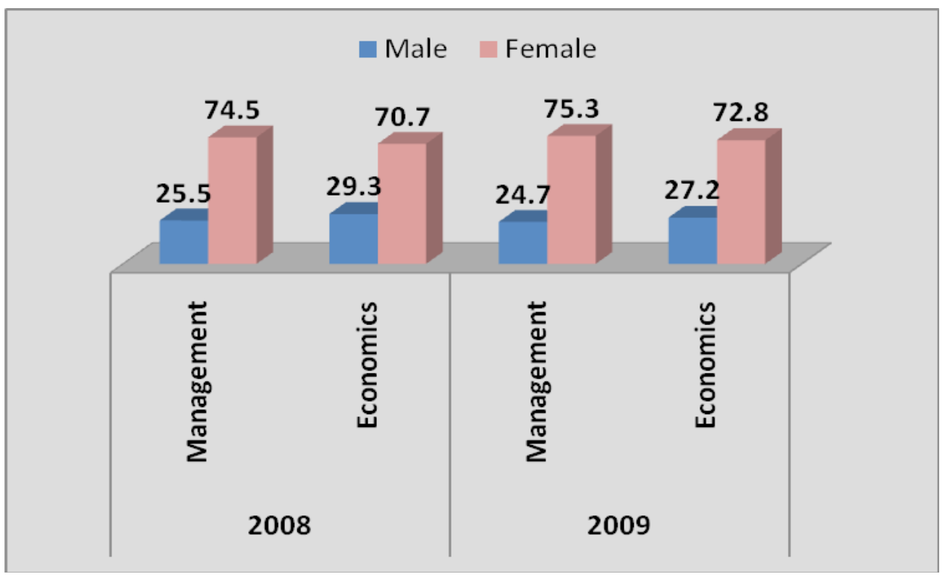

FIGURE 4.2. Percentage Distribution First Degree Business Management and Economics Graduates, 2008 and 2009

In terms of entry qualification, the main feeder to both programmes were *Sijil Tinggi Pelajaran Malaysia* (STPM)/STAM[2], with 63% reported in 2008 and 54% in 2009 as shown in Figure 4.3. The next highest percentage in 2008 is from Matriculation/ASASI, followed by Diploma holders. However, about the same proportion of the 2009 Business Management and Economics graduates entered university through Matriculation/ASASI and Diploma.

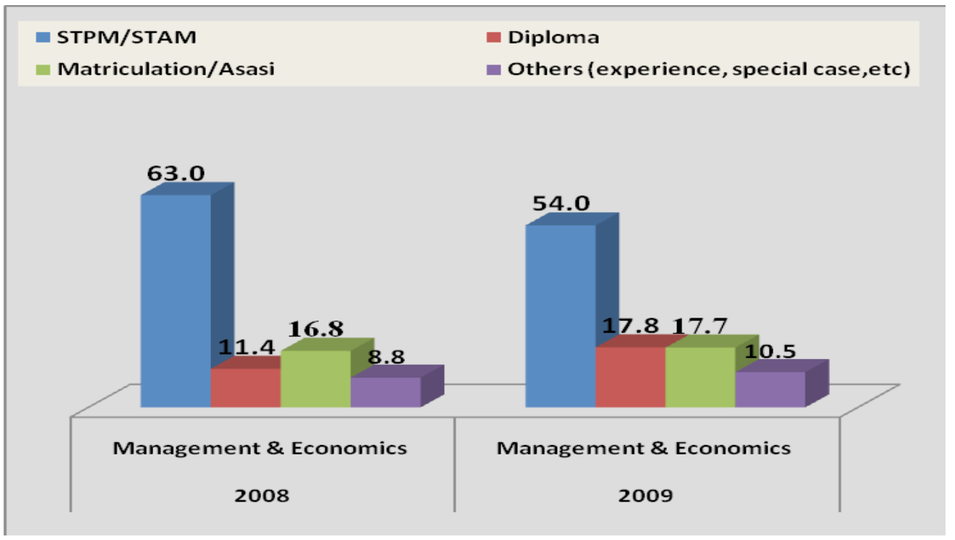

FIGURE 4.3. Percentage distribution of First Degree Business Management and Economics Graduates by Entry Qualification, 2008 & 2009

2. STAM – Sijil Tinggi Agama

TABLE 4.8. Percentage distribution of First Degree Business Management and Economics Graduates by Entry Qualification, 2008 and 2009

I. II. ENTRY QUALIFICATION	2008			2009		
	BUSINESS MANAGEMENT	ECONOMICS	TOTAL	BUSINESS MANAGEMENT	ECONOMICS	TOTAL
	N=2656	N=1719	N=4735	N=3139	N=2190	N=5329
STPM/STAM	60.4	67	2756	47.8	62.9	2878
Diploma	14.3	7	500	25.4	6.9	948
Matriculation/ Asasi	16.6	17	733	14.5	22.4	946
Others (experience, special case,etc)	8.7	9	386	12.3	7.8	557
TOTAL	100	100		100	100	

4.3.2 Employment Status

In terms of employability at the point of graduation, around 62% of first degree 2009 Business Management and Economics graduates were reported working, with this figure being slightly lower in 2008 (57.4%). Kindly note that the survey was carried 3 to 6 months upon convocation, hence these figures reflect market absorption of these graduates within that duration. Data reveals around 35% of graduates who participated in the survey are unemployed at the time of the survey, with a reportedly large proportion of them actively looking for work. About 4% of 2009 Business Management & Economics first degree graduates went for further studies, slightly higher than what was reported in 2008 (Figure 4.4).

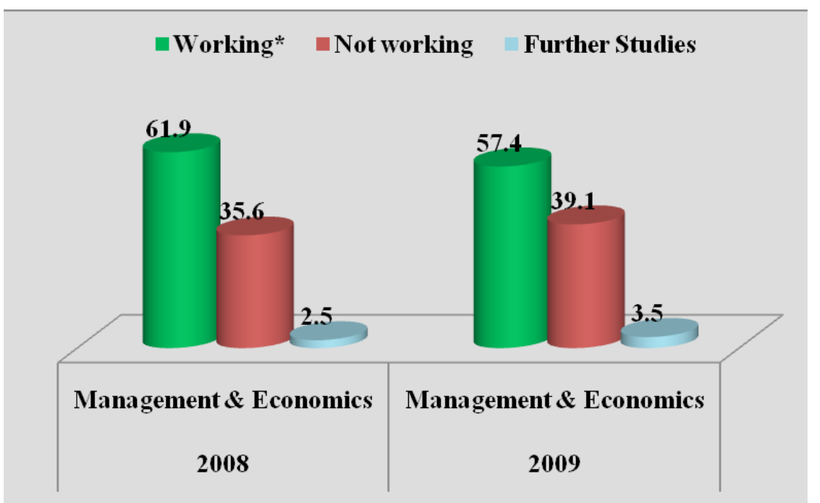

FIGURE 4.4. Employment Status of Business Management & Economics First Degree Graduates, 2008 and 2009

A higher percentage among 2008 and 2009 first degree Business Management graduates are employed, i.e. 69.5 and 63.5% respectively. Thus the percentage of those unemployed among first degree Economics graduates is also much higher than among Business Management graduates. In 2009, almost 45% of Economics degree holders were reportedly unemployed, compared to 45.9% in 2008. In contrast, the percentage of unemployed Business Management graduates stood at 35% in 2009 and almost 30% in 2008. However, as indicated in Table 4.9 and displayed in Figure 4.5, the proportion of Economics graduates who continued their studies was higher compared to those of Business Management graduates (6.2% in 2009 and 4% in 2008).

TABLE 4.9. Percentage Distribution of Business Management and Economics Graduates By Employment Status

EMPLOYMENT STATUS	2008			2009		
	BUSINESS MANAGEMENT	ECONOMICS	TOTAL	BUSINESS MANAGEMENT	ECONOMICS	TOTAL
	N=2560	N=1687	N=4247	N = 2968	N = 2137	N=5105
Working[3]	69	51.1	61.9	63.5	49	57.4
Further Studies	1.5	4.0	2.5	1.5	6.2	3.5
Not working[4]	29.5	44.9	35.6	35	44.7	39.1
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

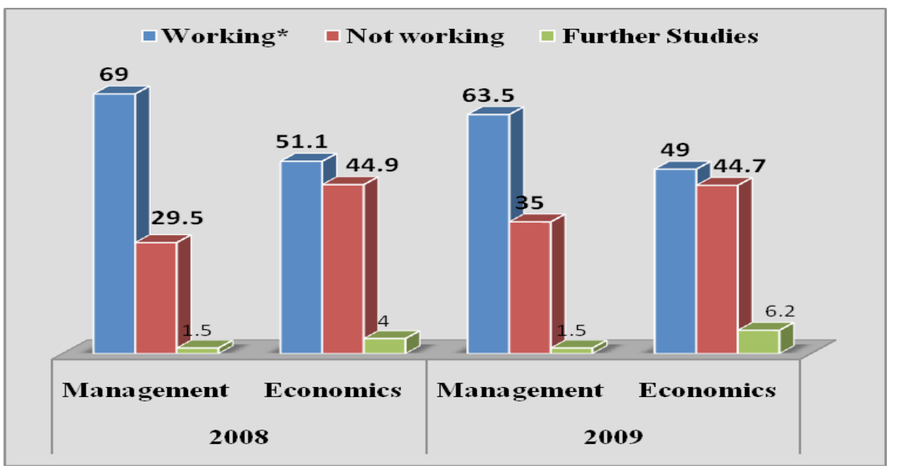

FIGURE 4.5. Employment Status of Business Management and Economics Graduates (First Degree), 2008 and 2009

3. *Working* including those waiting for job placement.
4. *Not working* including those attending skill enhancement course (Skim Latihan Graduan (SLG) dll).

4.3.3 Job Status

A majority of first degree Business Management and Economics graduates managed to secure permanent jobs for both years surveyed, with 2008 reporting a slightly higher percentage (54.2%) compared to 2009 (50.5%). A similar pattern was observed for temporary jobs (Figure 4.6 and Table 4.10). On the other hand, more 2009 graduates worked on a contract basis (29%) than their 2008 peers (23.4%), and a small percentage were self employed or working with family.

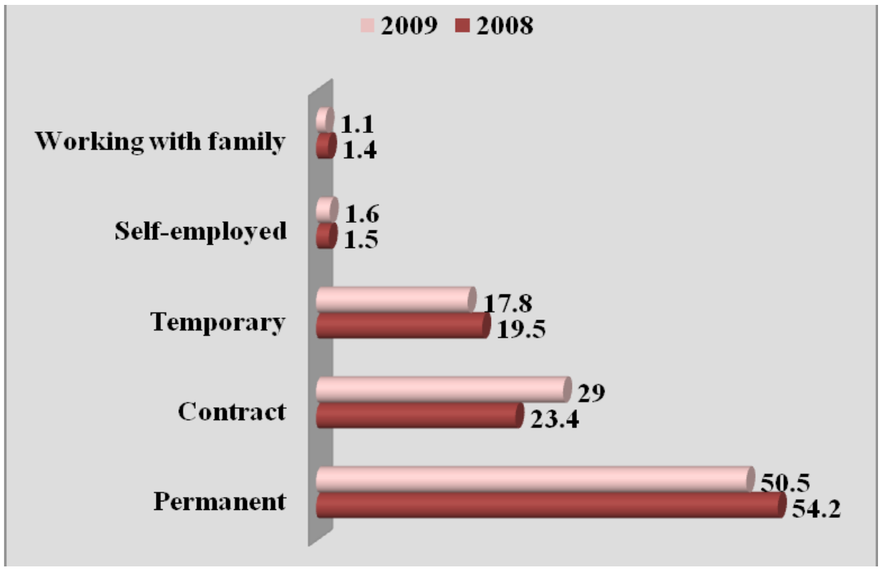

FIGURE 4.6. Job Status of Business Management and Economics Graduates (First Degree), 2008 and 2009

Among these working graduates, the result in Table 4.10 and Figure 4.7 show that in 2008, a higher percentage of Business Management graduates had permanent jobs (58.1%) compared to those who were Economics graduates (45.8%). Despite a lower percentage in 2009, employment among Business Management graduates still came in at 55.2% compared to Economics graduates (41.6%). In both Business Management and Economics, more graduates were employed contractually in 2009 compared to 2008. The results also indicate a similar increasing trend among Business Management graduates who were temporarily employed.

TABLE 4.10. Percentage Distribution of First Degree Business Management and Economics Graduates by Job Status for 2008 and 2009

JOB STATUS	2008			2009		
	BUSINESS MANAGEMENT	ECONOMICS	TOTAL	BUSINESS MANAGEMENT	ECONOMICS	TOTAL
	N=1693	N=782	N=2475	N=1778	N = 935	N=2713
Permanent	58.1	45.8	54.2	55.2	41.6	50.5
Contract	22.4	25.6	23.4	27.0	32.7	29.0
Temporary	16.7	25.6	19.5	15.3	22.6	17.8
Self-employed	1.6	1.4	1.5	1.5	1.9	1.6
Working with family	1.2	1.7	1.4	1.1	1.2	1.1
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

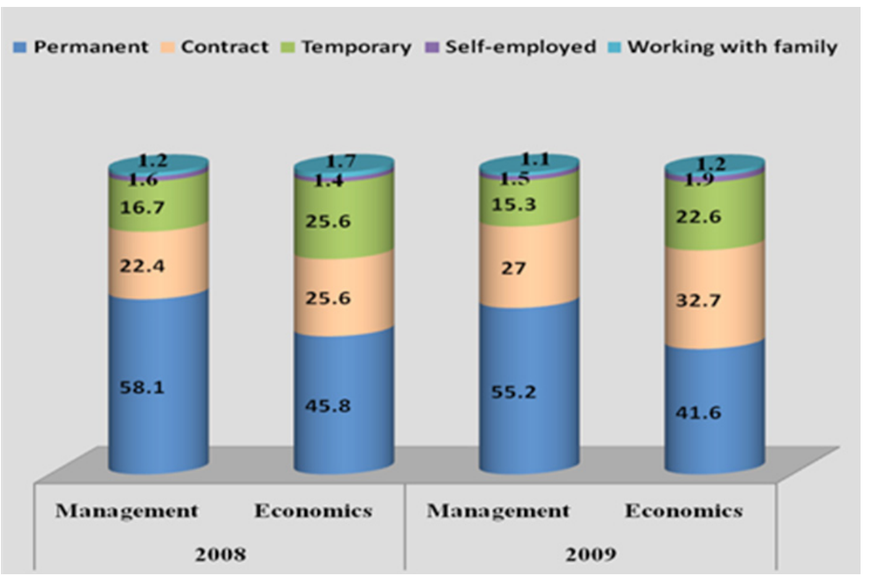

FIGURE 4.7. Percentage Distribution of First Degree Business Management and Economics Graduates by Job Status for 2008 and 2009

4.3.4 Sectors of Employment

Figure 4.8 represents employment sectors of first degree Business Management and Economics graduates. A large proportion of these graduates are employed in the private sector of both local and private organisations. In 2009, 47.3% of first degree Business Management and Economics graduates reported working with private local companies, compared to 43.4% in 2008.

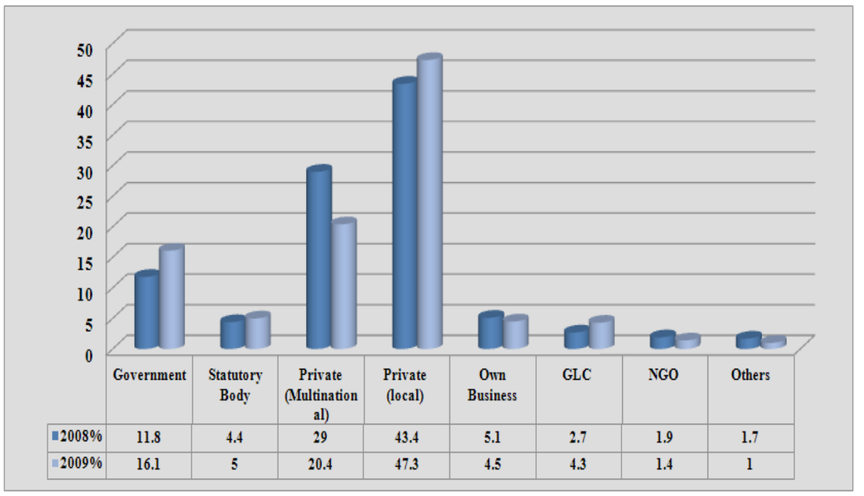

FIGURE 4.8. Percentage Distribution of First Degree Business Management and Economics Graduates by Employment Sectors for 2008 and 2009

In 2008, more than 65% of both Economics and Business Management graduates worked in the private sector in either local or multinational companies. More Economics graduates also worked in the public sector, compared to Business Management graduates. However, as indicated in Table 4.11, there was a reduction in the percentage of graduates working in the private sector, and an increase in the percentage of graduates working in the public sector, especially among Economics graduates. The result indicates that the employment percentage in public sector including GLCs increased in 2009 due to Government intervention, which compelled GLCs to increase their intake of fresh graduates to ease graduate unemployment problems.

TABLE 4.11. Percentage Distribution of Business Management and Economics Graduates by Employment sectors, 2008 and 2009

EMPLOYMENT SECTORS	2008			2009		
	BUSINESS MANAGEMENT	ECONOMICS	TOTAL	BUSINESS MANAGEMENT	ECONOMICS	TOTAL
	N=1693	N=782	N=2475	N=1778	N=935	N=2713
Government	10.5	14.6	11.8	13.1	21.8	16.1
Statutory Body	4.3	4.7	4.4	4.9	5.1	5
Private (Multinational)	29.2	28.6	29	21.3	18.7	20.4
Private (Local)	45.1	39.6	43.4	49.9	42.5	47.3
Own Business	4.8	5.8	5.1	3.6	6.3	4.5
GLC	2.7	2.6	2.7	4.8	3.3	4.3
NGO	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.4	1.3	1.4
Others	1.5	2.2	1.7	1	1	1
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

4.3.5 Main Job Classifications

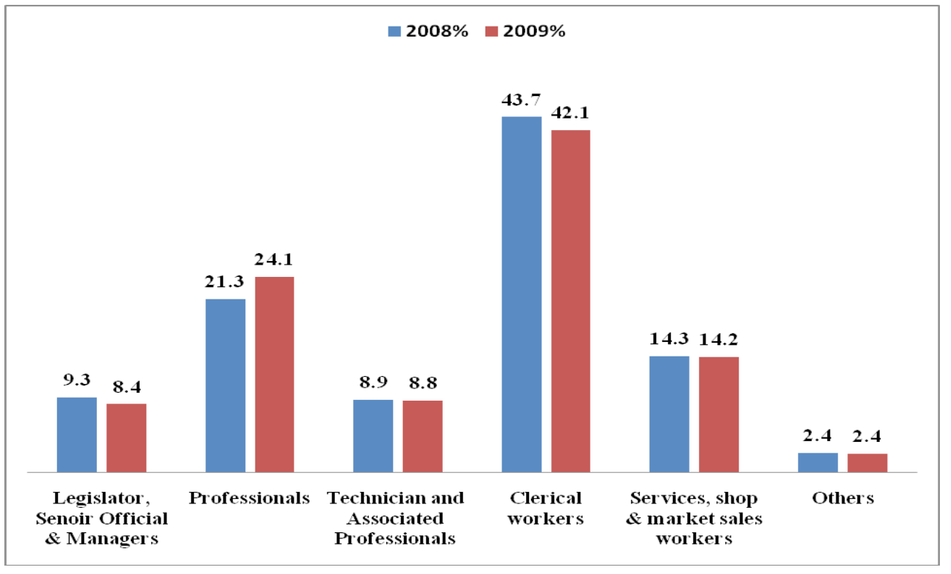

FIGURE 4.9. Main Job Classifications of Business Management and Economics Graduates (First Degree), 2008 and 2009

TABLE 4.12. Percentage Distribution of First Degree Business Management and Economics Graduates by Main Job classifications, 2008 and 2009

MAIN JOB CLASSIFICATIONS[5]	2008			2009		
	BUSINESS MANAGEMENT	ECONOMICS	TOTAL	BUSINESS MANAGEMENT	ECONOMICS	TOTAL
	N=1693	N=782	N=2475	N = 1778	N = 935	N=2713
Legislator, Senior Official & Managers	7.6	7.4	0.3	9.3	6.8	8.4
Professionals	22.4	34.7	1.4	21.3	29.3	24.1
Technician and Associated Professionals	9.2	9.7	0.4	8.9	8.7	8.8
Clerical workers[6]	42.3	34.3	1.4	43.7	38.9	42.1
Services, shop & market sales workers	16.2	12.1	0.5	14.3	14.0	14.2
Others	0.3	1.8	0.1	0.4	0.3	0.4
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

5. Refer to description in Appendix 4.
6. Including administrative clerks, accounting, finance clerks, and telephone operators.

4.3.6 Salary

Figure 4.10 shows the monthly income of first degree Business Management and Economics graduates. The acceptable income for graduates for 2009 was RM1500 to RM2000, with around one-quarter of this (25%) earning a monthly income of RM1001 to RM1500. The acceptable income for first degree Business Management and Economics graduates in 2008 was also RM1500 to RM2000, though at a slightly lower percentage (28.9%) compared to 2008. The percentage of graduates earning RM1001 to RM1500 rose to 27.2% in 2009 from 25.1% in 2008. Graduates getting a salary of above RM2501 also show a point reduction of about 1% (from 10.5% in 2009 to 9.5% in 2008). Data also revealed a small percentage of graduates with incomes of less than RM500.

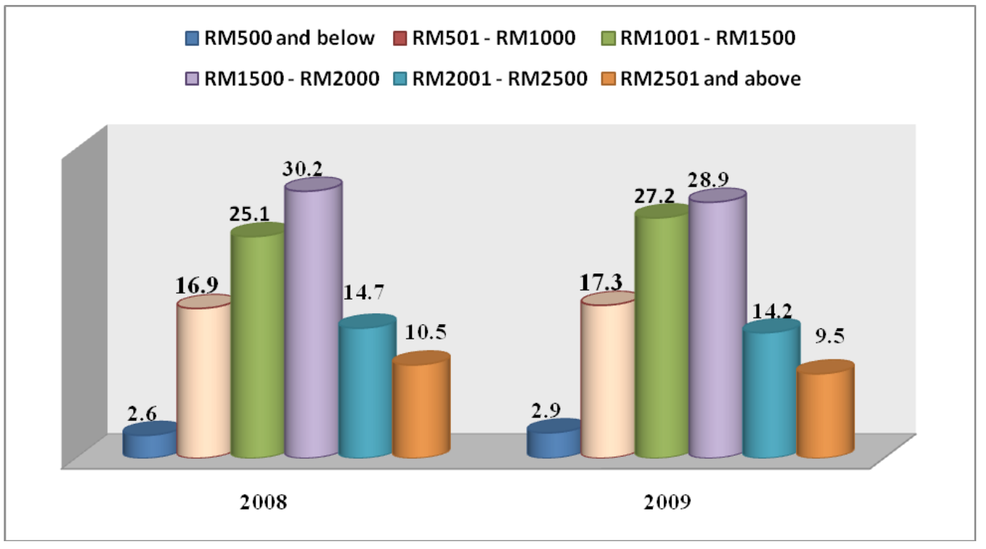

FIGURE 4.10. Percentage Distribution of First Degree Business Management and Economics Graduates by Monthly Income for 2008 and 2009

Results of Table 4.13 indicate that in 2008, a majority of Business Management and Economics graduates were actually paid commensurate to their qualifications. Close to 27% of Economics graduates in 2008 earned a monthly income of RM2000 and above, at par with their qualification. This figure was reduced to 22.3% in 2009. Around one-quarter of Business Management graduates earned more than RM2000 throughout both years (24.5% in 2008 and 24.6% in 2009). Data revealed a decreasing percentage of Economics graduates earning more than RM2500 (from 10.9% in 2008 to 7.0% in 2009) in contrast to a slight increase in percentage for Business Management graduates.

TABLE 4.13. Percentage Distribution of Business Management and Economics Graduates by Monthly Income, 2008 and 2009

MONTHLY INCOME	2008			2009		
	BUSINESS MANAGEMENT	ECONOMICS	TOTAL	BUSINESS MANAGEMENT	ECONOMICS	TOTAL
	N=1693	N=782	N= 2475	N = 1778	N = 935	N=2713
RM1000 and below	18.8	21	19.5	19.8	20.8	20.2
RM1001 - RM1500	26.3	22.2	25.1	26.4	28.6	27.2
RM1500 - RM2000	30.3	29.9	30.2	29.2	28.3	28.9
RM2001 - RM2500	14.2	16	14.7	13.6	15.3	14.2
RM2501 and above	10.4	10.9	10.5	11	7	9.5
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100	100

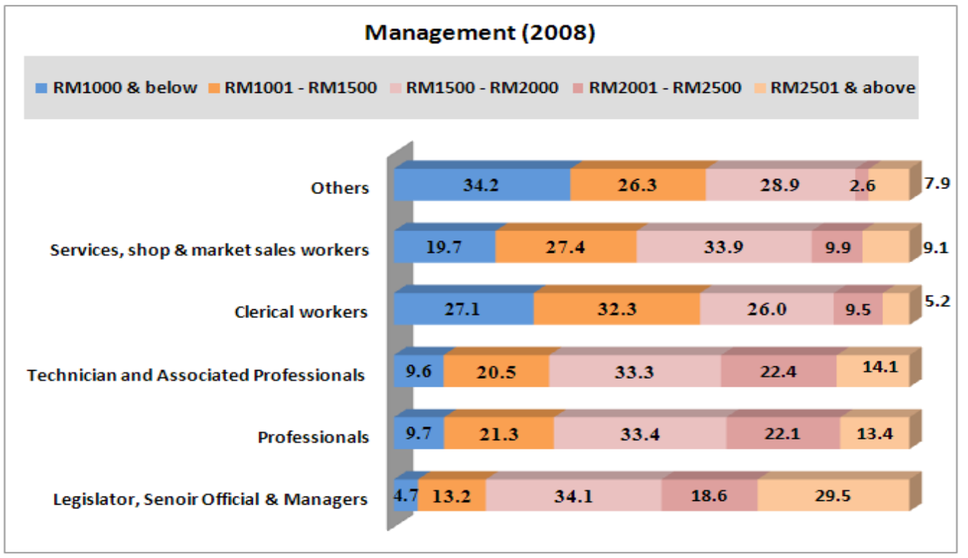

FIGURE 4.11a. Percentage Distribution of First Degree 2008 Business Management Graduates by Monthly Salary

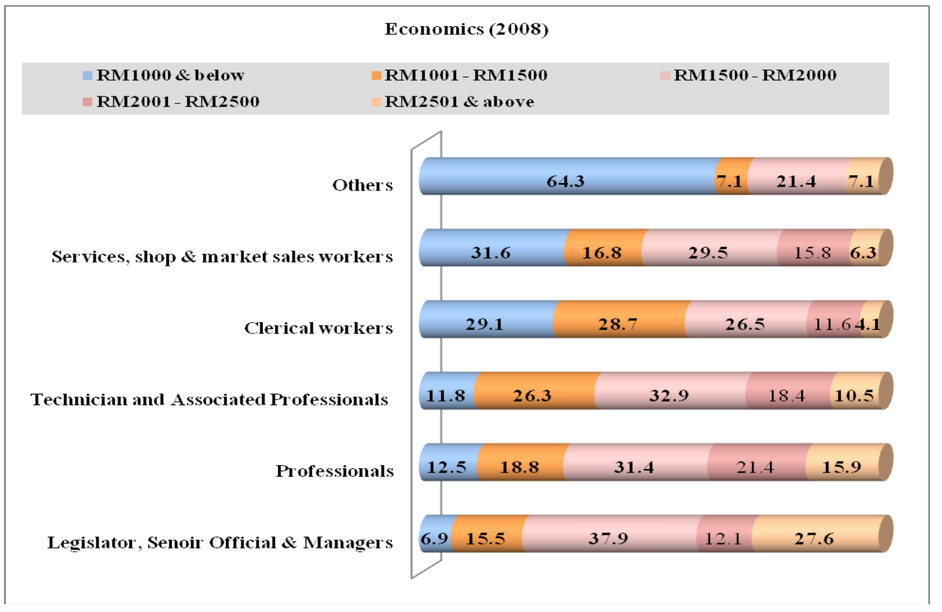

FIGURE 4.11b. Percentage Distribution of First Degree 2008
Economics Graduates by Monthly Salary

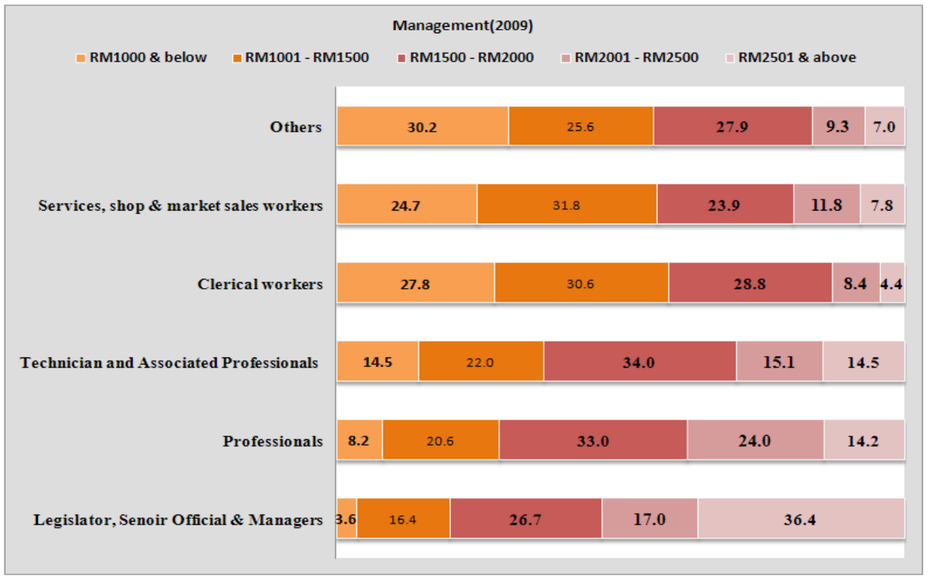

FIGURE 4.11c. Percentage Distribution of First Degree 2009
Business Management Graduates by Monthly Salary

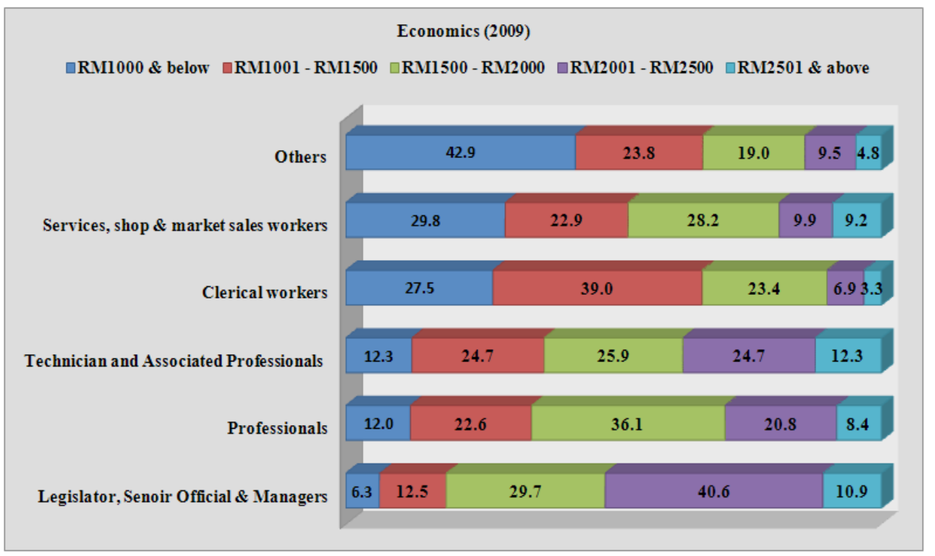

FIGURE 4.11d. Percentage Distribution of First Degree 2009 Economics Graduates by Monthly Salary

4.3.7 Perception of Graduates on Study Programmes

In the survey, graduates of public IHLs were required to rate their satisfaction level towards the programmes and services offered by the learning institutions they attended. The result in Table 4.14 indicated that for 2009, in terms of the curriculum in general, Business Management students expressed higher satisfaction level compared to Economics graduates. The result also showed that in most aspects of the curriculum, higher percentage of satisfied graduates were recorded for 2009 compared to 2008.

In terms of *suitability of the study programme*, *university compulsory subjects, inculcation and practicing of positive values* and *exposure to general knowledge and current issues*, more than 70% of both Business Management and Economics graduates were satisfied. In terms of *preparing students for the working world*, 62% of Economics graduates in 2009 were satisfied compared to 58% in 2008. Similarly, 72% of Business Management graduates in 2009 were satisfied compared to 61% in 2008.

TABLE 4.14. Curriculum evaluation Percentage distribution of Business Management and Economics Graduates for 2008 and 2009

CURRICULUM XI. XII.	2008						2009					
	BUSINESS MANAGEMENT			ECONOMICS			BUSINESS MANAGEMENT			ECONOMICS		
	DISSATISFIED	NEUTRAL	SATISFIED	DISSATISFIED	NEUTRAL	SATISFIED	DISSATISFIED	NEUTRAL	SATISFIED	DISSATISFIED	NEUTRAL	SATISFIED
Suitability of the Study Programme	1.7	21.3	77.0	2.0	23.7	74.3	1.5	17.5	81	2.2	22.6	75.2
Balance between theoretical and practical/ application component	5.2	32.3	62.5	7.8	33.8	58.4	3.4	26.4	70.2	6.3	31.4	62.2
Industrial attachment programme/practicum	5.3	21.9	72.7	8.0	25.3	66.7	4.3	19.7	76	6	26.8	67.2
Compulsory co-curriculum subjects	6.3	26.8	66.9	4.5	19.5	76.0	4.3	26.2	69.4	5.1	28.4	66.5
University compulsary subjects	4.5	20.3	75.3	4.5	19.5	76.0	2.6	17	80.4	4.8	21.3	74
Variety of co-curriculum subjects offered	5.4	22.4	72.2	5.4	21.5	73.0	3.9	21.5	74.6	4.9	21.2	73.9
Preparing students for working world	8.5	27.7	63.8	12.1	29.9	58.0	5.2	22.5	72.3	9.8	28.5	61.7
Inculcation and practicing of positive values	1.2	14.6	84.2	1.7	13.5	84.8	0.7	9.9	89.4	1.1	12.9	86.1
Exposure to general knowledge and current issues	2.6	21.6	75.8	2.9	19.1	78.0	1.5	17.1	81.3	2.7	20.8	76.5

4.3.8 Language and Communication Skills

a. Own Perception

Graduates were also asked to rate their satisfaction level towards their language and communication skills. Table 4.16 summarises their overall evaluation of their soft skills for 2008 and 2009, namely proficiency in Bahasa Malaysia (BM), English and Interpersonal Communication skills. As expected, their evaluation of their BM proficiency was generally very high at over 90% (or 9 out of 10) in 2008, with a slightly higher rating for 2009. However, only 62.3% of first degree Business Management and Economics graduates in 2008 were satisfied with their English proficiency, rating this only slightly higher in 2009 (67.1%). Hence, these graduates were quite aware of their lack of proficiency in English. On the other hand, 7 to 8 out 10 of these graduates were satisfied with their interpersonal communication skills.

TABLE 4.15. Language Proficiency and Communication skills of Business Management and Economics Graduates for 2008 and 2009 (Overall Percentage)

SOFTSKILLS	2008				2009			
	DISSATISFIED	NEUTRAL	SATISFIED	ALL	DISSATISFIED	NEUTRAL	SATISFIED	ALL
Bahasa Malaysia (BM)	1.1	7.4	91.4	100	0.7	5.9	93.4	100
English	3.3	34.4	62.3	100	2.4	30.5	67.1	100
Interpersonal Communication	1.6	22.1	76.3	100	1.2	18.9	79.9	100

The results presented in Table 4.16 indicate that more than 90% of graduates in 2009 were satisfied with their proficiency in Bahasa Malaysia (BM), in contrast to Business Management graduates in 2008. Less than 65% of graduates in 2008 were satisfied with their English language proficiency, whereas in 2009, 72.2% of Business Management graduates were satisfied with their English language proficiency compared to the 60% recorded by the Economics graduates. In terms of *interpersonal communication*, 82% of Business Management graduates in 2009 were satisfied compared to only 77.4% in 2008. However, the increment is negligible for Economics graduates.

TABLE 4.16. Language Proficiency and Communication skills of Business Management and Economics Graduates for 2008 and 2009

SOFTSKILLS XIII.	2008						2009					
	BUSINESS MANAGEMENT			ECONOMICS			BUSINESS MANAGEMENT			ECONOMICS		
	DISSATISFIED	NEUTRAL	SATISFIED	DISSATISFIED	NEUTRAL	SATISFIED	DISSATISFIED	NEUTRAL	SATISFIED	DISSATISFIED	NEUTRAL	SATISFIED
Bahasa Malaysia	1.2	8.2	90.6	1.0	6.3	92.6	0.6	4.9	94.5	0.8	7.3	91.9
English	3.1	34.3	62.6	3.6	34.6	61.8	1.2	26.5	72.2	4.0	36.1	59.9
Interpersonal Communication	1.6	21.1	77.4	1.7	23.6	74.6	1.0	16.7	82.3	1.5	21.9	76.6

b. MUET Score

The result of the MUET was tabulated against perception on the graduates' English language proficiency and is presented in Table 4.17. The result shows that among the graduates with MUET band 1 scorers, less than 33% were satisfied with their English language proficiency with the exception of the 2009 Business Management band 1 graduates (50%). For Business Management graduates with band 2 scores, more than 55% were satisfied with their English language proficiency compared to less than 43% of their Economics counterpart. The result also indicates that for graduates with high MUET scores of band 4 or higher, more than 75% were satisfied with their English language proficiency, with a very small percentage (less than 6%) stating they were actually dissatisfied with it. The results imply that the higher the MUET band scores, the higher the evaluation of their English proficiency skills (although a small portion of graduates thought otherwise).

TABLE 4.17. Perceived English Proficiency and MUET Results of Business Management and Economics Graduates, 2008-2009

MUET XIV	2008						2009					
	BUSINESS MANAGEMENT			ECONOMICS			BUSINESS MANAGEMENT			ECONOMICS		
	DISSATISFIED	NEUTRAL	SATISFIED	DISSATISFIED	NEUTRAL	SATISFIED	DISSATISFIED	NEUTRAL	SATISFIED	DISSATISFIED	NEUTRAL	SATISFIED
Band 1	7.3	60.5	32.3	5.8	61.5	32.7	2.0	48.5	49.5	12.0	54.2	33.7
Band 2	3.1	43.2	53.8	5.9	51.6	42.4	1.8	40.7	57.4	5.1	52.7	42.2
Band 3	3.0	33.6	63.4	3.0	33.3	63.6	0.7	24.5	74.8	3.4	33.3	63.3
Band 4	2.1	18.7	79.2	2.5	20.7	76.8	1.1	11.5	87.4	2.2	18.5	79.3
Band 5	1.6	17.5	81.0	1.7	18.3	80.0	5.9	5.9	88.2	2.5	11.1	86.4
Band 6	0	0	0	0.0	27.3	72.7	0.0	0.0	100	0.0	25	75

4.3.9 Personal Skills

Business Management and Economics graduates were also requested to evaluate their personal skills. The results presented in Table 4.18 reveal that in all aspects of personal skills, more than 70% of respondents perceived their skills to be at a satisfactory level, though graduates in 2009 perceived a higher satisfaction level compared to 2008 graduates. Between the two fields, the 2009 Business Management graduates perceived a higher level of satisfaction compared to the Economics graduates. The result is somehow reversed for the 2008 graduates.

TABLE 4.18. General Personal Attributes Business Management and Economics Graduates, 2008 and 2009

PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES	2008						2009					
	BUSINESS MANAGEMENT			ECONOMICS			BUSINESS MANAGEMENT			ECONOMICS		
	DISSATISFIED	NEUTRAL	SATISFIED	DISSATISFIED	NEUTRAL	SATISFIED	DISSATISFIED	NEUTRAL	SATISFIED	DISSATISFIED	NEUTRAL	SATISFIED
ICT skills	2.9	20.1	77.1	3.4	20.0	76.6	2.3	17.1	80.6	2.5	18.9	78.6
Creative and critical thinking skills	1.8	22.2	76.0	2.2	23.3	74.5	0.7	18.4	80.9	1.8	22.9	75.3
Problem Solving skills	2.0	22.1	76.0	1.8	21.6	76.5	0.8	16.7	82.4	1.5	20.7	77.9
Analytical skills	2.0	25.6	72.4	1.7	22.8	75.6	1.2	20.5	78.3	1.5	23.1	75.5
Team work	1.4	12.6	86.0	1.5	13.2	85.4	0.7	8.9	90.4	1.3	12.5	86.1

4.3.10 Effectiveness of Study Programme and Self Development

The study also measured the impact of study programmes on graduates' personalities and skills development. The graduates were asked to rate how much the programme influenced their self development. The result of the responses is tabulated in Table 4.19 and 4.20.

a. Skills Development

The result in Table 4.19 indicates that in almost all aspects of skills development, more than 80% of graduates in both fields for 2008 and 2009 considered the programmes effective, except for *creative thinking skills* among the 2008 Business Management graduates (78.4%). However, the perception is lower in 2008 compared to 2009, and through a comparison of the two fields, the perception of 2008 Business Management graduates is notably lower than that of Economics graduates.

TABLE 4.19. Study Programmes and Skill Development of Business Management and Economics Graduates for 2008 and 2009

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT XV	2008						2009					
	BUSINESS MANAGEMENT			ECONOMICS			BUSINESS MANAGEMENT			ECONOMICS		
	NOT EFFECTIVE	NEUTRAL	EFFECTIVE	NOT EFFECTIVE	NEUTRAL	EFFECTIVE	NOT EFFECTIVE	NEUTRAL	EFFECTIVE	NOT EFFECTIVE	NEUTRAL	EFFECTIVE
Creative and critical thinking	1.7	15.8	82.5	2.0	15.8	82.2	0.7	12.1	87.2	1.5	16.8	81.7
Problem solving and decision making	1.6	14.1	84.3	1.7	14.4	83.9	0.5	11.3	88.2	1.3	14.6	84.2
Team work/group working	1.1	10.3	88.6	1.3	10.8	87.8	0.5	7.4	92.0	0.9	11.1	88.0
Effective communication	1.7	14.4	83.9	2.0	15.1	82.9	0.8	10.7	88.5	1.2	16.0	82.8

b. Personality Development

The result in Table 4.20 indicates that the 2009 graduates perceived their skills development to be much more effective compared to their 2008 peers. The result also shows that for 2009, more than 84% of Business Management graduates perceived that their personality development was effective compared to roughly more than 80% of Economics graduates. *Ability to be independent, become more knowledgeable,* and *enhance self maturity* were traits that were perceived to be much more effective compared to *readiness to face the outside world,* which had the lowest percentage. Similarly, the 2008 graduates' perception on personality development generally recorded lower results for Business Management graduates compared to Economics graduates. This is in contrast to 2009, in which Business Management graduates indicate a higher percentage than Economics graduates.

4.3.11 Adaptability in the Workplace

In response to perception towards job adaptability, Table 4.21 indicates that more than 80% of the respondents perceived a high level of adaptability in all aspects, with exceptions for *problem solving and decision making skills* and both *written and spoken proficiency in the English language.* For 2009, 86% of Business Management graduates perceived their level of *problem solving and decision making skills* as high, compared to only 78% in 2008 perceiving their level as high.

TABLE 4.20. Personality Development Percentage distribution of Business Management and Economics Graduates for 2008 and 2009

PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT XVI.	2008						2009					
	BUSINESS MANAGEMENT			ECONOMICS			BUSINESS MANAGEMENT			ECONOMICS		
	NOT EFFECTIVE	NEUTRAL	EFFECTIVE	NOT EFFECTIVE	NEUTRAL	EFFECTIVE	NOT EFFECTIVE	NEUTRAL	EFFECTIVE	NOT EFFECTIVE	NEUTRAL	EFFECTIVE
Self confidence	1.4	14.5	84.1	2.1	15.2	82.7	0.9	11.2	87.9	1.7	16.1	82.3
Maturity	1.2	10.3	88.6	1.3	10.7	88.0	0.7	8.6	90.7	1.0	11.0	88.0
Self esteem	1.6	15.0	83.4	1.5	14.8	83.7	0.7	12.1	87.2	1.2	14.6	84.2
Knowledgeable	1.1	10.4	88.5	1.2	10.0	88.9	0.5	8.3	91.2	1.1	10.5	88.4
More aware of the current affairs	2.1	18.2	79.6	2.1	16.5	81.3	1.7	13.9	84.4	1.8	16.3	81.9
Independent	1.1	8.9	90.0	1.0	9.6	89.4	0.6	7.4	92.0	0.5	10.0	89.5
Readiness to face the outside world	2.5	16.7	80.8	4.1	19.3	76.6	1.6	13.1	85.3	3.0	17.6	79.3

Table 4.21. Workplace adaptability Percentage distribution of Business Management and Economics Graduates for 2008 and 2009

ADAPTABILITY XVII	2008						2009					
	BUSINESS MANAGEMENT			ECONOMICS			BUSINESS MANAGEMENT			ECONOMICS		
	LOW	NEUTRAL	HIGH	LOW	NEUTRAL	HIGH	LOW	NEUTRAL	HIGH	LOW	NEUTRAL	HIGH
Workplace adaptability	1.1	13.3	85.6	1.1	13.3	85.6	0.3	8.8	90.9	1.0	15.2	83.9
Problem solving and decision making skills	1.4	19.8	78.8	1.7	19.3	79.0	0.3	14.1	85.7	1.0	20.6	78.4
Confidence to perform the task required	1.5	15.2	83.3	1.4	16.9	81.7	0.4	11.4	88.2	1.3	15.6	83.1
Working in a team	1.5	10.5	88.0	0.1	12.7	87.2	0.6	6.4	93.1	0.7	12.4	86.8
Communication skills	1.1	14.6	84.3	1.0	15.3	83.6	0.3	9.5	90.2	0.5	15.8	83.6
Proficiency in Bahasa Malaysia: Spoken	0.9	8.0	91.1	0.8	8.7	90.5	0.4	4.4	95.2	0.7	8.7	90.7
Proficiency in Bahasa Malaysia: Written	0.9	8.5	90.6	1.5	8.1	90.5	0.4	5.9	93.7	0.7	9.7	89.6
Proficiency in English Language: Spoken	1.8	29.7	68.5	1.9	30.0	68.1	0.9	22.6	76.6	2.6	32.3	65.1
Proficiency in English Language: Written	1.8	32.1	66.1	1.7	30.3	68.1	0.6	22.8	76.7	2.7	31.4	65.9
Usage of ICT	1.6	17.5	81.0	1.8	15.4	82.7	1.2	10.3	88.5	1.4	17.8	80.7
Ability to use ICT	1.7	18.2	80.1	1.7	18.1	80.2	1.0	12.1	86.9	1.4	18.9	79.7

4.4 Focus Group Discussion

The recruitment of Business Management and Economics graduates are high for Panasonic, ACCCIM and CIMB, at around 30% according to the estimates given by their respective representatives. In contrast, Business Management and Economics graduates only account to 10% of Petronas recruitment, all of whom are taken in to work within their specialised areas. For PPIM, the field graduates are from is of less concern, with the focus trained instead on finding graduates with the "right skills" which can then be further developed through training.

TABLE 4.22. Intake of Business Management & Economics Graduates

COMPANIES	PERCENTAGE
Panasonic	30%
Petronas	10%
CIMB	30%
ACCIM	30%
PPIM	Small – about 2 graduates
DPMM	No data

For DPMM, the Chamber acknowledges that graduates do not regard SMEs as potential employers. Often, the SMEs they serve do not have the luxury of choosing "good" graduates, as very few of these graduates will consider working in SMEs. Instead, graduates are drawn to big corporations and multinationals, as the following statement indicates:

> *I think most graduates put some importance or preference in multi-national companies. I think in Malaysian job structure, the first preference is Petronas. Second layer is government now, and thirdly banks.....The leftover will be on these SMEs. (DPMM)*

Similar opinions were also given by other members. For these respondents, the graduates' perception of a company's size and what it can or cannot offer them is directly related to the status they will achieve as employees. The common misconception is that since SMEs are small enterprises, they offer lower opportunities for promotion, and in turn, a lower professional status:

> *They think it's (SMEs) lower. They always want to go higher and higher (ACCCIM)*

> *One thing is status, another is security... the first choice would normally be MNCs, even if the Government has put so much emphasis on going with SMEs rather than MNCs (DPMM)*

Interestingly, the members see this as an issue not only in Malaysia, but in developed nations like Japan. In a situation that mirrors Malaysia's, big corporations in Japan such as Matsushita and Mitsubishi are seen as "preferred employers" and therefore get the first pick of new recruits. This is the total opposite of the enterprising China, where setting up businesses and working in small companies are not regarded as being lower in status.

Additionally, SMEs have further disadvantages in that they may not have enough capital/resources to train graduates. Because of this, these organisations are not particularly attractive to new graduates. Indeed, very few SMEs can afford to do as Petronas and Panasonic are doing in terms of offering scholarships to students for first or postgraduate degrees:

> *There are no members willing to provide a training ground for unemployed graduates because there are two worries. 1: They perceive that these are the leftovers from the screening process of big corporations. The perception is that they are not good. 2: These small/ medium companies are not prepared to spend money to train with the expectation that these people will leave the organisation someday for better opportunities. (DPMM)*

For SMEs, an advantage of being the "second pick" of graduates is that they end up employing graduates at a much discounted rate. The current conditions of the market is further aiding the cause of SMEs, since there are now an "abundance of graduates", particularly those with Economics and business backgrounds.

> *With the economic slowdown and with the abundance of graduates in the market, I believe that graduates are more ready to take up any task or any kind of job offer in the market. At the same time, the industry – specifically the SMEs – have another advantage of bargaining for workforce with negotiated rates to offer.....graduates in SMEs at a lower salary compared to minimum by the government. But still, there are takers because of the lack of opportunities to enter employment (DPMM)*

> *From our research, we recently found out that people who enter unemployment graduate programmes for entrepreneurship organised by PNS for example... there are more graduates from an Economics and Business study base rather than Social Sciences (DPMM)*

Petronas and CIMB suggested increasing their interest in Economics and Business Management students. For CIMB, the allure of business and Economics students seems fitting, given the nature of the banking industry. For these companies, other types of social sciences graduates do not fit into

their employment or industry. For these companies, having generic business/ Economics/Business Management knowledge is fundamentally important. Even more important is having "graduates" with quantitative technical skills:

> *All in all, whole industry in Petronas, we acknowledge the need for widespread systemic and systematic thinking, whether its Economics which we call corporate planning, or treasury, or finance; whether it's the engineering, or marketing. If it's social science, there are very few of those in our organisation, if we run statistics it is not even a dot in our organisation. We focus on business students, Economics and others (Petronas).*

Panasonic's position is interesting. On the one hand, the company employs about 30% of Business / Economics / Business Management students for various jobs, including in marketing and sales. However, the Panasonic manager stresssed that the company's hiring policy was more open, meaning that graduates with certain qualities would be hired regardless of their degrees. As the manager puts it:

> *Your degree is only a ticket to get this position. Your degree will not help you much in your job but your attitude will.*

TABLE 4.23. Nature of the Work Given to New Graduates and Their Skills

COMPANIES	NATURE OF WORK
Panasonic	Analytical / Forecasting Sales and marketing
Petronas	Risk analysis / Business Management Analytical Business Development
CIMB	Sales and Marketing Analytical
ACCIM	NA
PPIM	Analytical / Problem solving
DPMM	Business Development Business Business Management

Overall, the new graduates recruited are absorbed into various types of jobs, such as sales and marketing to risk analysis and business development. Across the board however, what these employers are looking for in graduates in terms of skills are somewhat similar, as the following table indicates:

KEY SKILLS	NUMBER
Problem solving (analytical)	5
Generic skills (well-roundedness)	4
Technical/Specialised knowledge	3
Resourceful	3
Multitasking	2
Quantitative skills	2
Interpersonal skills	2

These organisations generally agreed that new graduates need to have problem solving skills, in addition to having good generic skills or "well-roundedness" (as defined Petronas and ACCCIM). New graduates are increasingly expected to be well-versed not only in their specialised fields, but also in other areas that are relevant to their job scope.

> *Last time we were informed to be "professional in your job". Meaning I'm a HR person, I'm expected to have in depth knowledge of all HR areas, I should be a specialist. That was 10 years ago. Now we have to become "T" manager. I'm an expert in my area, you cannot argue with me as far as my job is concerned. But I must also have knowledge of all other areas. This is new development; managers are expected to know all. I'm not only expected to know my job (Panasonic)*

> *Same like a HR person must be able to understand cash flow, balance sheet elements/items. The business needs to understand HR implications such as the labour law, contract laws, etc. because we need that kind of managers to contribute to team dynamics (Petronas)*

In terms of specialised knowledge, employers like Petronas and Panasonic expect Business Management and Economics graduates to have specialised knowledge of their relevant fields:

> *For Economics and Business Management, we also recruit them for specialised areas involving planning. For example, talent sourcing – the identification of seasonal effects (Petronas)*

> *True, I agree....job require a specific accounting skill I will definitely drill into these people for the job. But when we're talking about general jobs, you're open, there's no rule to be able to do something (Panasonic)*

There exists a certain industry expectation that Economics and Business Management students, who have been required to take calculation subjects as part of their studies, will automatically possess quantitative skills. For these respondents, these quantitative skills go hand-in-hand with the problem solving and analytical skills that Business Management and Economics graduates are typically expected to have. In contrast, the qualitative nature of other types of social science degrees is not especially favoured by these same employers. Because of this, statistics for social science graduates are almost nonexistent, claimed the Petronas representative:

> *If it's social science, it's very few in our organisation, if we run statistics it is not even a dot in our organisation. We focus on business students, Economics and others.*

Additionally, three potential employers agreed they look for resourcefulness in new graduates. For organisations like PPIM, Petronas and ACCCIM, this is the critical trait that enhances graduates' abilities to solve problems. While it is not possible to prioritise these different skills, a prospective employer did state that it looks for graduates with a balanced "mix" of skills:

> *We believe in skill mix, like technology mix, the question now is the balancing ratio between the mix of skills. We test that language capability, function capability, soft skills, of a certain balance, then we can have these people. It's more ratio balancing than functional vs. soft skills. You have to have a skill balance (Petronas)*

However, it is a challenge for these employers to find graduates that fit these requirements. This will then raises the following question: what role must universities play in preparing graduates for the demands of the workplace?

> *So my question then was whether our approach or our curriculum really suits as what probably Petronas expected. Because today we heard how Petronas sets a very long list of qualification barriers that one has to go through to enter. On the contrary, what we are producing at the university level are generalists. They have a basic level attainment of the basic degree. When we are looking at what type of skills we want to develop, basically it's not so much about knowledge of course work but disciplines in training the problem solving skills, all EQ skills (DPMM).*

Even so, the DPMM representative acknowledged that universities face an uphill task in preparing graduates to meet the expectations of both the industry and prospective employers. Complicating the matter further is the knowledge

that industry and employer expectations shift with an alarming frequency. The following abstraction reflects this viewpoint:

> *It's encouraging, finally we realise what is being expected in the market. Rather than we just produce students with general degrees and different levels of CGPA. But at the end of the day the market industry keeps coming up with a long list of complaints, they cannot fit here and cannot fit there.*

4.4.1 New Graduate Selection

Different employers adopt different methods to find the "right" graduates. For example, Petronas uses a screening combination of interviews and entry level assessments.

> *When people are brought into Petronas' Entry Level Assessment, the interview is one of the many components of the assessment. We look at their creative thinking, problem analysis, temperament, transfer qualities and a few other qualities (Petronas).*

The stringent selection process aims to identify graduates who fit into the company's employment philosophy, which is to recruit graduates capable of becoming future leaders who can deliver their best in 5 to 6 years:

> *Because when we bring people into the organisation, our philosophy is not only to deliver the job now, in 5-6 years, you are going to lead a team (Petronas)*

> *After 7 or 8 years they will be promoted, and they will lead. When they lead that's when direction setting comes in. After that what if they do not have prerequisite basic while they are in employment when we put them in the leadership position? That will be very difficult. That's why we do the test (Petronas).*

Even with this system in place though, finding the right graduates still remains a challenge as the following statement reveals:

> *When we do the screening, we have the kind of graduates that have the potential to be groomed to lead. We also have people who do not have that potential. It's a balancing situation (Petronas).*

> *At the entry level of our assessment, we are able to but not at 100%. Our probability of input of success of these people to become a potential leader in the organisation is about 15% above tossing the coin (Petronas).*

Petronas further refines its recruitment filtering system to enable the identification of not just "good" graduates, but those who possess the characteristics that will enable them to be dynamic corporate citizens:

> *It's interesting when you say that, because we are now at the process of fine-tuning and calibrating our entry level filter. To the point where we do a certain percentage of these people who are different in regards to the norms, that they are disobedient, they want things different, go against corporate governance. As a corporate governance-motivated culture, we have this sort of outlook on entrepreneurship, can drive and lead but that behaviour comes together in a package. Whether Economics, business, or engineering, we notice that. To the point where we have to re-calibrate our filter to purposely see the group of entrepreneur type and not corporate type. This is what we want.*

In contrast, other employers in the focus group continue to rely on more traditional methods of graduate selection: the interview process. The selection methods used might be connected to the training given to newly recruited graduates – the more training a company gives its graduates, the more care it will take in graduate selection (since extensive training usually involves substantial monetary and non-monetary investments on the organisation's part). For example, graduates working for Petronas are given extensive on-the-job training involving the boss and other co-workers:

> *In Petronas, we replicate the experience of learning like in universities, i.e. Assignments. The boss will create questions regarding an issue. The boss will guide them through questioning. They will have to get the answers, and assemble into a report format.*

While it is not possible to determine how far other organisations will take on-the-job training to bring its new graduates up to speed, it can be concluded there are two camps in this focus group with regard to how training can be classified: one side sees training as an investment (Petronas, Panasonic and CIMB); and the other sees it as an expenditure.

> *Stresses a lot on training...We have a training centre in Shah Alam, Singapore and Japan. I was sent to Japan for 8 months after 4 years in the company. In the future, they will stop sending Japanese to other companies, but will be sending other people (Panasonic)*

> *Training is an investment. For our sales staff, normally in products training, we need to impart all information to them. We do spend quite a large amount (CIMB).*

The following are the contrasting views on how training should be classified (investment versus expenditure):

> *SMEs .....Generally consider training as expenditure rather than investment, because of the worry of leakage of manpower from the company after being trained. SMEs are not prepared to upgrade staff performance (DPMM).*
>
> *Most industries now are expecting graduates who are ready for the market, because of the sophistication or speed the ECONOMICS is being run now we don't have much time to prepare or transform graduates into the industry. The leverage will be on the big corporations, they have time, resources, and the budget to reshape and retrain (DPMM)*

For organisations that view training as an investment, the graduate recruitment programme represents a long term commitment the organisations make to graduates. Thus the goal of recruitment is to recruit individuals that will stay with the organisation for longer periods and will "grow" with them:

> *I need someone to grow the company in the future and my recruitment is not 2 to 3 years (Panasonic)*
>
> *Because when we bring people into the organisation, our philosophy is not only to deliver the job now. In 5 to 6 years, you are going to lead a team (Petronas)*

Unsurprisingly, employers that see training as expenditure believed that this view is a by-product of a company's small size. A small company typically means smaller resources; therefore, less money is available for training.

Here, it is crucial to note that the different classification of training (investment versus expenditure) will invariably lead to different organisations forming vastly diverse expectations of the new graduates they recruit. For example, the expectations of SMEs are much higher, as they expect graduates to be ready to adapt to the working environment:

> *The industry is waiting with the expectation that this graduate is ready to fit into the working environment and to start working tomorrow morning (DPMM).*
>
> *Most industries now are expecting graduates who are ready for the market. Because of the sophistication or speed the Economics is being run now, we don't have much time to prepare or transform graduates according to industry requirements (DPMM)*

For companies like Petronas and Panasonic, the expectation may be somewhat different – they want graduates with certain skills who can be trained further and who possess "learning skills" ("transfer qualities", according to the Petronas manager, or "disciplines in training" as mentioned by the DPMM representatives). In the case of Petronas, the focus of the selection process is to look for graduates with potential:

> *When we do the screening, we look for the kind of graduates that have potential to be groomed to lead.*

4.4.2 The Issue of Attitudes

Differences of opinion aside, all potential employers expect new graduates to have the right attitude when joining the workplace. For Panasonic and Petronas, graduates are expected to know what they want out of their jobs, the type of jobs they are suited for, and their motivations for their pursuit of specific degrees. In most cases however, these organisations are forced to deal with new graduates who are ambivalent about their career path. While graduates themselves may regard this attitude as an indicator of their flexibility, recruiters actually consider this approach to be flawed, as the following comment by the Panasonic manager reveals:

> *A lot of graduates are unsure of what they want to do. Normally our question will be: What type of job are you interested in? And their answer is "Any type of job". To them, they might be trying to impress us by saying that they are very flexible, but to the employers it will not look that way. As a business entity, my business priority comes first. I don't have time to train fresh graduates. We are prepared to take fresh graduates and train them provided you are sure of what you want to do and stay with us.*

Recruiters also bemoan the pervasiveness of another kind of attitude commonly exhibited by graduates today. When asked by potential employers about their choice of study, many graduates readily admit their decision was primarily motivated by the desire to "make big money". The following comments made by the Petronas representative examine this issue:

> *We ask, what is the purpose of you taking up Economics, or Accountancy? What is the novel purpose? Most of them say "I want big money"....The purpose of you becoming an economist is to bring out the body of knowledge that you have learnt, to contribute back to the nation in terms of the implication of the seasons.....When we went to Wales, even a primary student when asked "Why do you study*

> *mathematics?" responded with "So that at Tesco I know what to buy at average price, that's why I learn mathematics" It's not to earn big money. When we ask our graduates why they learn Economics, medicine, etc. the answer is because later on I can earn big money. The mindset is not clear to them.*
>
> *The bigger issue the industry faces is that when you bring people, the sense of purpose to contribute is no longer there. Even post-graduates, for Petronas we do recruit PhD, master degrees for our researchers, "Your life will be in literature, in the lab, going back to the desk, and going back to the lab. Are you sure you want to be a researcher? But we will send you for your postgraduate studies" And they reply "No no, I don't want to be a researcher". You see, that kind of mindset that we are facing is the issue.*

Even so, it is critical to highlight the following statement by the Petronas representative, who was remarking on new graduates' lack of career focus:

> *To expect this from fresh graduates is a bit unfair. It is very difficult to identify that skill at a young age.*

4.4.3 The Quality of University Graduates

These representatives generally agree that fresh university graduates do have a place in their organisations. After all, these officers have no qualms admitting that a big part of a fresh graduate's appeal is due to their overwhelming enthusiasm and can-do attitude. Moreover, fresh graduates are easier to train compared to their more experienced colleagues:

> *For fresh graduates, their motivation to start work is bombastic. Willing to explore! Their enthusiasm! That is when some of the heads/managerial level they feel that they want this kind of enthusiasm rather than having people sometimes with experience. Sometimes with experienced people, they feel like it's harder to mould them. It's nice to have fresh graduates because they can do a lot of things, explore lots of things and willing to go the extra mile sometimes (CIMB).*

However, enthusiasm and a willingness to learn do not guarantee that new graduates will go on to become top performers at work. Interestingly, three employers (Panasonic, Petronas and ACCCIM) suggested that lower education qualifications may well be a better predictor of job performance, as the following views reveal:

> *Certain standards must be there. Because I've been at this job for 20 years. I have been doing my own observation, when we employ a person with very poor SPM results, I take note of it. After 3 or 4 years, when their performance review comes in, I refer back to their SPM results. The correlation is superb. If you would ask me now, I would trust the SPM results more than degree (Panasonic).*
>
> *We have done that correlation as well, and it points to the same thing (Petronas)*
>
> *Actually in Siemens where I was working as a HR Executive, we did the same thing to look at SPM. Good results in graduate studies is a bonus and if this two do not match we will KIV. There is no reason why if you flunk SPM, and then there is a chance to suddenly become a good engineer (ACCCIM).*

In a job market that is slowly becoming oversaturated with degree holders, it becomes important for employers to know the historical background of the new graduates they intend to recruit. In this day and age, companies that emphasise human capital development are likelier to pass over "mass produced" graduates in favour of ones with unique selling points. This view is reflected in the following comments made by the Panasonic manager:

> *You come to my company, throw a stone and you'll hit a graduate. A graduate is so easy to be employed nowadays compared to SPM/STPM holders. But the process of making people to be called a graduate is that, I always question this, last time you must really be intelligent to be given a place in the university and to be called a graduate. Nowadays, I saw someone with results of 7-8-9 and he comes for the interview with a graduate degree.*

The low regard for university graduates stems from a variety of reasons, all of which can be categorised into two major variables – factors related to the universities themselves (micro) and factors relating to the system of higher learning in Malaysia (macro).

4.4.4 Micro Factors – Relating to the Local Universities

Two key issues raised by the respondents revolve around the curricular structure of the universities, as well as their faculties. The respondents raised two conflicting points with regard to curricular content.

On the one hand, the respondents generally believed that the basic content of the curricular structure adopted by Malaysian universities is more than adequate.

In fact, some managers believe that graduates receive a more substantial education in Malaysia than they would in foreign universities:

> *I heard your comments in the market that our graduates have been overexposed on basic knowledge in Economics as compared to our counterparts in European or American universities. When our graduates go for further studies, they do some repetition on what was being taught here at undergraduate level. Our standard is a bit higher, to some extent our curriculum has surpassed the basic requirement of undergraduates especially UKM, when they entered London School of Economics they did repetition on what was being taught in undergraduates (DPMM).*

However, a critical weakness of the curricular structure adopted by Malaysian universities is this: it focuses far too much on academic knowledge (content), at the expense of providing industry applicable knowledge that graduates will benefit from once they enter the job market. This notion was repeatedly revisited in the focus group discussion:

> *The issue is that we focus on content and fail to focus on delivery. Packaging the knowledge to be applied to the industry – that is missing (Petronas).*
>
> *Because the higher education should, by right, prepare graduates for life. Rather than becoming a tool (straight away I can use), ok you may be able to use it, but after 3 years you find them obsolete. There is no more value (ACCCIM).*
>
> *Another one we observe, from the academic world contribution to body of knowledge, from the industry world we want to hit the bottom line. We have this paradox. To the point where we introduce the transfer qualities because transfer qualities is a portion of the body of knowledge created by academic world. Otherwise the industry and academic world will be separate. This one is patent, that contribution; this is literature, that is trade secret. We want transfer qualities to come a little bit into industry world (Petronas).*
>
> *Your degree is only to train you to have input, the process of receiving input, processing the input and to produce output. So most of the young graduates, they fail on the process part. They receive the input but most of them fail at processing, so the output is not there (Panasonic).*
>
> *Of course I cannot deny the needs of teaching the subjects as being what is required in the curriculum per se, but they must also be given*

> *the opportunity to attend what we call the "Finishing Schools". The Finishing school is the bridge that meets the gap between what we produce in the university and what is expected by in the industry. So we have to really define and format the Finishing Schools. As we cannot find the Finishing School elements in our current curriculum in universities because problem solving in academic is very different from problem solving in the industry (DPMM).*

Similar views were raised in interviews with government officials, as the following abstract reveals:

> *In terms of curriculum and syllabus, a more structured industry attachment is required. The universities need to conduct regular dialogues with the industries to keep abreast and up-to-date with the requirements of the industries. Current contents of the syllabus cover about 80% from the text and 20% practical. Changes should be looked into this... as the industries require more of the practical knowledge from graduates. The areas that should be concentrated are said to be in knowledge-based and service related areas.*

Malaysian universities' reluctance to incorporate industry applicable knowledge into curricular structure actually adversely affects fresh local graduates, who enter the workforce with zero exposure to the industry. This creates a chain reaction – local graduates find themselves unable to ask the right questions on the job, and frequently wind up being accused of not being curious or analytical enough:

> *The only thing I cannot deny is that these (students from other countries) are very talkative in class, very analytical, very curious, that is where our people are lacking. Not in terms of basic knowledge, we have the basic knowledge but we don't explore, we are not curious. We take the basic knowledge as it is and that's it (Panasonic).*
>
> *At large, the lack of questioning of "why?" rather our graduates like to ask the question "how?" When it comes to the industry, we need the questioning "why?". You should ask "why I do this?" So that it can be applied at work (Petronas).*
>
> *In a Japanese organisation, we are trained to ask 5 times "Why" before they tell the staff (Panasonic).*

According to the Panasonic representative, fresh local graduates' lack of curiosity often leads to an inability to demonstrate innovative thinking:

> *You think that A-levels here we learn a lot more than the Japanese engineering, but why are the Japanese better innovators than Malaysians? So maybe at Year 1 and Year 2, knowledge wise we are much better, but it comes to Year 3, Year 4 they become more curious, become more innovative and explore new things. The difference is there (Panasonic).*

At this juncture however, it is important to acknowledge that this lack of curiosity among locally produced graduates may actually stem from the culture they were raised in. The DPMM representative made an apt observation on growing up in Malaysia:

> *Our culture has been raised and taught to never ask why. Can we ask our father why?*

This is supported by the observation made by the Petronas representative:

> *That is the issue in Petronas; we replace the questioning of why with "does it mean this?" or "does it mean that?" To the point we have to recondition them. If they have been trained in the tertiary kind of setting, that culture will be sort of momentum they walk into the industry. A second nature to them.*

The importance of emphasising different things at different levels in universities (for Year 1 through to Year 4, as suggested by the Panasonic representative) was also shared by the DPMM representative:

> *...one pertinent question being asked was "are they teaching these students the right taxonomy"? "At the right levels"? Because we expect in these higher level of undergraduates (3rd or 4th year) they must be on analytical, reasoning, critical analysis and so on...*

Of equal importance is the academic faculty's ability to provide graduates with a learning experience that goes beyond knowledge contained in textbooks. This view is raised by two respondents, from ACCCIM and DPMM:

> *How can we have a well-rounded student if the lecturers are not well-rounded themselves? Only accounting lecturers can teach accounting (ACCCIM).*

> *Because we expect these higher level of undergraduates (3rd or 4th year) they must be on analytical, reasoning, critical analysis and so on, but the academic staffs are not well equipped in all background and pedagogy what will happen? (DPMM)*

The DPMM representative maintained that the academic faculty of a Malaysian university should not only be familiar with the basic knowledge they teach, but that they should also understand the implications of adopting a particular pedagogy of teaching and testing their students:

> *Probably they couldn't differentiate between asking multiple choices and analytical question, or maybe a critical question..... when I taught final year students, I never asked multiple choice questions. I even ask them for open book examinations.....In open book examination, if you're not analytical enough or not critical enough as asked by the question, you don't fit into my passing system. So I end up failing more than giving passes to my students. Because I expected them, you are at this level you must pass this basic parameter. If you don't pass these basic parameters, you don't fit my passing grade.*

This view is shared by the Petronas representative, who remarked that futures graduates will someday be expected to bring more to the table than mere academic achievements. Rather, employers prefer graduates who are able to employ outside-the-box to identify unseen threats and opportunities (commonly referred to as 'blind spots') to a business.

Though most graduates lack this valuable skill, the respondents believed that this was something that could be inculcated in graduates through the use of radically different teaching techniques and testing methods:

> *Now we are developing the ability to define blind spots. It's a skill in itself. The executive will look through all the obvious and look for blind spots..... but young ones will not be able to identify because it's not in the syllabus that they learn..... It can be taught. We have done some tests on that, through open book, tacit knowledge can be quantified and transferred through at classroom level.*

One may argue that academic faculties cannot be expected to provide their students with a more holistic learning experience, when the gaps in their current teaching methods continue to be unaddressed. The reality of it is that there is a growing industry expectation that academic faculties have no choice but to revise their teaching approach if they hope to produce dynamic future members of Malaysia's workforce. However, with this expectation comes the very real possibility that academic faculties need to be retrained.

4.4.5 Macro Factors – Relating to the System of Higher Learning in Malaysia

The industry's low regard of new graduates can be partly blamed on the system of higher learning in Malaysia. The concerns raised by the respondents revolved around:

1. The liberalisation of the industry.
2. The lowering of entry requirements for universities.
3. The inconsistent standards adopted by public and private IHLs.
4. The shortening of study durations at universities.

For the respondents, these factors not only negatively affect the quality of graduates produced but also exacerbate the problems they themselves face in finding the right graduates for recruitment:

> *When we do the screening, we have that kind of graduates that have potential to be groomed to lead. We also have people who do not have that potential. It's a balancing situation. Perhaps it's because of the exodus of masses. Therefore at industrial level, we have begin a filtering, a filtration system to catch graduates that have this outlook traits (Petronas).*

The respondents are worried that the liberalisation of the higher education industry in Malaysia brings with it a team of new players who place a far greater emphasis on the business of education, rather than the quality of graduates they produce:

> *I'm only worried about small universities and instead of education it becomes business education. More profit oriented. They don't want to fail students because if their failure rate is higher nobody wants to enrol (Panasonic).*

Similarly, the ACCCIM representative noted that when higher education industry players insist on pursuing their own agendas, it becomes inevitable that the graduates they create will suffer from having had an unbalanced, subpar education:

> *I think with higher education, because a lot of stakeholders. Each stakeholders trying to lay claim, these are the people that I want, these are the characteristics to have. But something is wrong with the configuration which is why our students became good or bad.*

Additionally, the lack of cooperation and collaboration between public and private IHLs only serve to make things worse:

> *Now that we have public and private universities, I find that collaboration between the two is very low. That is dangerous because 50% of enrolment is in private education, so it's very worrying without collaboration. We may have 2 different types of groupings. In private itself, they are not even. Some are very good, some other colleges have low standards (ACCCIM).*

The groups generally agree that the lowering of university entry requirements means that the capabilities of today's graduates can no longer be compared to graduates of the past, who were required to excel in academics as well as personal growth. The easing of university entry requirements means that students no longer feel the need to push themselves, as the following comment made by the Panasonic manager indicates:

> *But the process of making people to be called a graduate is that, I always question this, last time you must really be intelligent to be given a place in the university and to be called a graduate. Nowadays, I saw someone with results of 7-8-9 and he comes for the interview with a graduate degree. So as a practitioner now, it makes me question the caliber of the whole education system.*

While these respondents generally regarded public universities to be of a better standard, concern remains that the influx of new higher education industry players are forcing public universities to reconsider their entry requirements so as to remain competitive. And when profit making becomes the overriding preoccupation, it comes as no surprise that public universities (with the exception of research universities) focus more on the business of education, rather than the quality of it.

> *My argument is that because some public universities lower the entry requirement, they are actually in direct competition with the private. Of course the research universities and newly upgraded universities are different (ACCCIM).*

The respondents generally believe that the liberalisation of Malaysia's higher education industry would be acceptable only if public and private IHLs were required to comply with a set of fundamental academic standards. What has also emerged from these discussions is that employers are generally more willing to recruit graduates from public universities, given that the standards of public IHLs were perceived to be of a higher calibre:

> *If you give me a choice now, I will not take from private universities. Maybe 5 years ago we tried to, but now we have changed our perception. We realized that public universities will produce better and more matured graduates (Panasonic).*

Graduate maturity was another issue addressed by the respondents. Though IHLs ostensibly view the shortening of study durations as necessary to expedite graduates' entry into the job market, the Panasonic manager remarked that this practice essentially created "immature" graduates incapable of making sound decisions – a severe shortcoming, considering the kinds of decisions they will be expected to make as working professionals:

> *From private university, a 17 year old takes 6 months of foundation they enter year 1. By the age of 21 they graduate. We take one or two but somehow we feel that they're not matured. Because you must remember that you come in as executive position. It comes with position, ranking and if like marketing, there's millions of dollars in advertising and expenditure. I'm surprised why the government allows two systems.*

All in all, the problems observed in the industry – particularly those stemming from the universities themselves and those coming from the entire system of higher learning – further complicate the recruitment and selection process for employers. A possible solution to address these concerns may be in the form of a university ranking system, akin to that which exists in the US:

> *Should have different types of institutions, don't standardise them, so that when the graduates from there we know that we have different expectations. Like in the US those who are very good they enter the elite school and people know, this is the standard.*

Additionally, interviews with a number of government officers indicate that the standards of local IHLs should also be enhanced through two methods: by encouraging institutions to focus on their niche areas; and increasing collaboration with industry, both domestically and internationally:

> *In making Malaysia as an educational hub – it has been suggested that we need to look at the niche areas and concentrate on them. Also, the local universities should work and collaborate with established foreign universities in specific niche areas.*

Notwithstanding the criticisms highlighted during these discussions, some respondents do acknowledge that graduates themselves must shoulder some of the blame for their academic and professional limitations:

> *It's more of individual behaviour and the passion for their subject matter that they have acquired over the years. That is where wholesomeness of a person that we bring in, not necessarily the degree (Petronas)*

A similar opinion was given by the DPMM representative, as the following comments show:

> *The discipline in searching for more knowledge should be encouraged. We believe that the difference between a good graduate and a mediocre one is their reading habits. By judging the way they put in ideas, a critical issue with our graduates is the level of knowledge they can apply in different situations and conditions. I believe that critical skill being required is like "benih yang baik dicampak ke laut menjadi pulau".*

4.4.6 Local versus Foreign Graduates

Debate continues to rage over the age-old question: are foreign graduates necessarily more capable than their local counterparts? As different as these two groups are, it cannot be denied that both bring equally unique value propositions to the industry. But where local graduates are believed to have a stronger grasp of academic knowledge (in addition to being more adept at producing written work), they fall behind their foreign counterparts when it comes to expressing themselves. This gives rise to a great deal of concern for the respondents, as the following comments depict:

> *In our HQ here in KL, we have a mixture of local and foreign graduates, those 100% from foreign universities they will speak their mind even if it's a small thing. Whereas our local graduates have this reservation, they have this barrier to share their minds, ideas and how to express. To the point where we have a special conditioning, asking them to please speak up and express their ideas (Petronas).*

> *Being overseas myself, I know how much I've studied. We practically didn't study much....I compared to my local friends and the amount of things they studied, we are nowhere. But when it comes to talking and debating, they are not there. I'm talking about communication and confidence level. In a meeting like this, people will not know what you think if you don't speak up (Panasonic).*

This then prompted Petronas and Panasonic to ask: who should rightfully take on the responsibility of strengthening local graduates' communications skills?

> *Question is should the industry do the conditioning, should it be at education level? Or should it be a collaborative effort? (Petronas)*

Members of the focus group did not have a ready response to this question.

4.4.7 Looking into the Future

Not too long ago, graduates could expect to obtain financial security simply by excelling in their studies. Their modern-day successors, however, are not given the same luxury. The dynamic nature of today's job market means that in addition to academic achievements, graduates are under increasing pressure to acquire a host of non-traditional skills and competencies. For example, the Petronas representative cited being "information savvy" as a quality that all graduates should have, regardless of their designation. In fact, employers are considering the possibility of sending their graduate recruits for post-graduate training, to help them learn research methodologies they can then use in the course of their work:

> *In future it's more of that consolidation of information into decisions, into strategies, or thinking. That is the skill that is required for our future executive, even at lowest level, to make decisions from the information available everywhere. Deduction of given information. Searching for relevant information. Synthesizing information into decisions. We are embarking on sending people for their masters degrees because the research methodologies are becoming more important in the industry.*
>
> *We have a research institute where the researcher and scientist are expected to do collaborative research through strategic alliances. In the industry, even the economist or business managers, we expect them to have this kind of outlook. The world is now seamless and borderless, and information is everywhere. Harnessing that information to have a break through.*

Other respondents agreed that in addition to being creative and thinking "outside the box", future graduates needed be more open to learning opportunities, particularly ones that helped to diversify their skill sets:

> *Emphasis on process rather than content. Being able to add value in many ways, because industry base will always change. Instead of looking at the world as a limited resource I think it's a world of abundance. These graduates should be able to take opportunities not just within Malaysia but also linked to other countries. Rather than just local (ACCCIM).*

CHAPTER 5

Challenges and Recommendations

5.1 Challenges

With human capital development identified as a central strategy in the formulation of the New Economic Model, the time has come for higher learning institutions to play a more proactive role in transforming its graduates into intellectually well-rounded individuals who will go on to become valuable members of Malaysia's future workforce.

Before this can happen, however, there are several significant obstacles that need to be addressed first.

5.1.1 Teaching and Curricula

Malaysian higher education providers commonly encourage students to pursue academic specialisations at an undergraduate level. As a result, graduates end up being too narrow in their thinking, consequently affecting their perspective on issues. And yet, a growing number of employers are looking for graduates who possess skills in critical thinking and problem solving.

When the teaching methods employed by local universities involve little more than learning by repetition, the graduates that are produced typically possess extensive theoretical knowledge but suffer from a woeful lack of communication, writing, and application skills.

5.1.2 Students

In the course of conducting the graduate tracer study (Table 4.22) for this report, it was discovered that a large percentage of the graduates who participated in the study felt dissatisfied with their command of the following skill areas:

1. Problem solving and decision making skills.
2. Written and spoken proficiency in the English language.

This finding comes as no surprise when studied in the context of Malaysia's examination-oriented education system. Malaysian students are traditionally taught from a young age to obey rules, and to learn by memorisation. It should be expected then that many Malaysian graduates lack critical thinking skills, are less likely to express themselves, and are typically very reluctant to ask questions.

The disparity is startling when Malaysian students are compared against their foreign counterparts, who are encouraged to discuss, debate, and express their opinions.

5.1.3 Resources

A key challenge faced by the Economics and Business Management education system is the short supply of quality local academics. For every good local academic of international repute who opted to stay in academia, there are many more who chose to leave the profession for better paying jobs elsewhere. This unfortunately places the onus on existing lecturers, who are required to juggle teaching multiple courses to a growing number of students with churning out research papers year after year.

Shortfalls in grants for public universities also mean that cutbacks to operating costs – including the hiring of lecturers – will negatively impact not just the student body, but the existing academic faculty as well.

5.1.4 Infrastructure

Poor infrastructure conditions in local universities could potentially adversely affect student achievement, as well as lecturer productivity and retention. To ensure a conducive environment for students and faculty members alike, places such as study areas, libraries, and seminar rooms must be regularly looked after and upgraded.

ICT facilities should also be available to students and maintained to ensure all software and hardware is suitably updated. Library collections – hardcopy books and journals as well as online resources – are important to a good university, as having a substantial online journal subscription and resources make it easier for students to do their research.

5.2 Recommendations

5.2.1 Curricula

a. Review of course content

Faculty members of Malaysian IHLs are largely responsible for determining the content of their courses, even in disciplines where curricula are recommended by external education or accreditation boards. Because of this, faculty members' expertise becomes a strong determinant in the design of course content.

Moving forward, course content should be reviewed regularly to ensure all teaching materials are current, relevant, and contribute to student learning. It is also important to make certain that these teaching materials accurately reflect the multiplicity of scenarios, challenges, and solutions that exist across the regional and global landscape.

b. Integration of a writing component in existing curricula

Many graduate students enter their programmes with basic writing capabilities and a fundamental ability to understand and summarise journal articles. However, some students are not successful writers, which may thwart their critical thinking skills.

More importantly, employers consistently name written and spoken language proficiency as a prerequisite for prospective recruits. However, these are the very same areas of dissatisfaction identified by the graduate tracer study (Table 4.22) participants.

It is recommended that a writing component be integrated into the existing Economics and Business Management curricula. Not only will this improve students' writing as a life skill, but it will also yield practical consequences reaching far beyond the academic world.

c. Review of undergraduate specialization

The current practice by Malaysian higher education providers of encouraging students to pursue academic specialisations at an undergraduate level would do well to be reviewed. Undergraduates would benefit greatly from a more holistic academic experience, as opposed to a rigid system of learning that encourages students to focus on accumulating extensive theoretical knowledge at the risk of neglecting the development of other equally critical "soft skills".

As set out in Appendix 1, the foreign universities sampled for this study demonstrated a strong emphasis on providing students with a well rounded education and flexibility in course selection. This approach to academia may be well worth following, given that early specialisations may not do good to students in the long run.

d. Cooperative linkages with industry and market

In this day and age, the traditional role of higher learning institutions has been transformed from merely educating young people to creating and disseminating knowledge to the whole society. And though a sizeable portion of funding for Malaysian public universities come from the Government, developing linkages with industry and market will enable Malaysian public universities to raise funding independently while acquiring skills and knowledge that could be contributed back to society.

Such arrangements between academia and industry could potentially reap lasting benefits to both parties. For instance, by working closely with industry leaders, faculty members gain a practical experience of the industry and recruitment benchmarks which can then be incorporated into their curricula and coursework. Students who participate in these linkages will also take away real-world industry experience with them into the job market.

5.2.2 Teachers and Teaching

a. Faculty Development Programmes

Some professors enter the field of academia unprepared for their roles as teachers. The typical academician learns his or her craft on the job, usually by employing the philosophy of "learning by doing". Within a year or two, most will have developed particular styles of teaching that will almost certainly last them their entire careers. The problem however, is that these teaching styles may not necessarily be effective in imparting knowledge to students. In this case, an option that should then be considered is faculty development programmes.

These are essentially a variety of instructional programmes that provide training for faculty members, particularly in improving classroom performance and developing a supportive environment for faculty members within their academic organisation. A basic faculty development programme should ideally comprise of the following components:

1. *Instructional Development:* Focusing on the content of what is taught. Participating faculty members will have the opportunity to examine specific teaching skills, such as how to lecture effectively or how to develop class discussions.
2. *Organisational Development:* Focusing on the relationships of faculty members to each other and to the environment in which they work. Participating faculty members could be trained in decision-making strategies, managing conflict within an academic department, and other interpersonal concerns.

3. *Personal Development:* Focusing on the areas of the faculty members' personalities that could potentially affect their learning and teaching (e.g. their values, attitudes, and prejudices). A faculty member's values and attitudes affect his or her ability to cope with change, to tolerate instructional innovation, to accept changing relationships with students or other faculty. A few suggested activities under this component could be personal growth seminars, life-planning workshops, and values clarification experiences.

b. Faculty Sabbaticals

Typically, university faculty members take sabbaticals, either by working on research projects within their institution or by spending at least part of their sabbatical at another university (either in their home country or at a foreign institution). It is our recommendation that it is made compulsory for faculty members on sabbatical to spend part of their time at an industrial or government organisation.

Gaining knowledge of and experience in an entirely different practical environment may very well lead to research projects that are both interesting and of practical value. In addition, there exists the prospect of a longer term consulting relationship.

An added incentive is that many academic institutions will only compensate for a semester leave. Therefore working with a government or industrial institution that is willing to provide compensation for the remainder of the year makes it financially feasible to take a complete year of leave. Such a lengthened sabbatical can provide a far more rewarding intellectual experience than one lasting for a single semester.

c. Teaching Methodology Review

Malaysian students are traditionally taught from a young age to obey rules, and to learn by memorisation. Consequently, most Malaysian graduates go on to prefer a learning system where active participation in class activities is non-compulsory, and where they are can solely focus on accumulating extensive theoretical knowledge. With human capital development identified as a central strategy in the formulation of the New Economic Model, the time has come for this outdated teaching and learning system to be replaced.

If we are to generate a new kind of graduate who excels in critical thinking, problem solving, and spoken and written communications, we must ensure that the curricula offered by Malaysian public IHLs is contemporary, student-centred, and based on problem-solving and critical thinking. Additionally, students should be encouraged to participate in classroom activities that enable them to communicate their ideas and interact with their peers.

d. Student Assessment System

It is our recommendation that Malaysian IHLs consider the implementation of student assessment systems, so that educators can ascertain what needs to be improved internally to achieve the following goals:

1. Meeting the learning needs of the students.
2. Understanding how students learn.
3. Establishing high standards for student learning.
4. Providing all students with equitable and adequate learning opportunities.

As a starting point, it is worth considering integrating aspects from Bloom's Taxonomy into these students assessment systems. Of particular importance are three educational objective "domains" set out by this classification: Affective (targeting the awareness and growth in attitudes, emotion, and feelings); Psychomotor (targeting change and/or development in behaviour and/or skills); and Cognitive (targeting the awareness and growth in knowledge, comprehension, and critical thinking).

5.2.3 Students

a. Industry internships

An urgent need exists to incorporate industry internships into the existing curricula offered. This will help students to bridge the divide between classroom-taught concepts and theories and their real world applications. But the benefits of industry internships go far deeper than simply bringing classroom lessons to life.

A recurring theme in most jobs is an employer's reluctance to recruit candidates who lack experience. Industry internships not only make otherwise inexperienced graduates more marketable as a job candidate, it also gives them the opportunity to gain a greater understanding of their chosen field.

Graduates would certainly gain some much-needed experience and exposure through short-term compulsory industrial attachments. Not only will they be exposed to a real working environment, they will also be able to apply what they have learnt in a real life setting.

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APPENDIX 1

UNIVERSITY	LSE, UK	NUS, SINGAPORE	UNIVERSITY OF CHULALONGKORN
Programme	BSc Economics BSc Econometrics and Mathematical Economics BSc Economics with Economics History	BSc Economics	
Course length (Years)	3		
Specialisation	Economics Econometrics and Mathematical Economics Economics with Economics History	Single or Double major	
University Courses	-		
Core Courses	• Economics B • Mathematical Methods • Elementary Statistical Theory • MicroEconomics Principles I or MicroEconomics Principles II • MacroEconomics Principles • Introduction to Econometrics • Internationalisation of Economics Growth, 1870 to the Present Day • Econometric Theory • Problems of Applied Econometrics	• Introduction to Economics Analysis • Principles of Economics • Foundations for Econometrics • Econometrics I, II and III • MicroEconomics Theory • MacroEconomics Theory • MicroEconomics • MacroEconomics • MicroEconomics Analysis I, II and III • MacroEconomics Analysis I, II and III • Quantitative and Computing Methods • Advanced MicroEconomics Theory • Advanced MacroEconomics Theory • Econometric Modelling and Applications I & II	• Advanced Economics Theory I • Advanced Economics Theory II • International Trade • International Finance • Economics of International Investment • Quantitative Methods in Economics Analysis • International Finance and Investment Theory • Research Method and Workshop in International Economics and Finance

UNIVERSITY	LSE, UK	NUS, SINGAPORE	UNIVERSITY OF CHULALONGKORN
Elective	• Advanced Economics Analysis • Africa and the World Economy • Business and Economics Performance Since 1945 • Commercial Law • Comparative Economics Development • Development Economics • Economics Analysis of the European Union • Further Mathematical Methods • Game Theory • History of Economics: How Theories Change • Industrial Economics • Innovation and Finance in the 19th and 20th Centuries • International Economics • Labour Economics • Latin America and the International Economy • Locational Change and Business Activity • Managerial Accounting • Economics Theory and its Applications	• Advanced Corporate Finance • Advanced Derivative Securities • Advanced Development Economics • Advanced Financial Econometrics • Advanced Growth Theory • Advanced Health Economics and Policy • Advanced Industrial Organisation • Advanced International Finance • Advanced International Trade • Advanced Labour Economics • Advanced Mathematical Economics • Advanced Money and Banking • Advanced Public Economics • Advanced Public Finance • Advanced Time Series Analysis • ASEAN Economies • Behavioural Economics • Comparative Business Cultures • Comparative Economics Systems • Corporate Finance • Cultural Economics I • Derivative Securities • Development Economics I and II • Economics Analysis of Law I andII • Economics Growth and Development • Economics Growth in East Asia • Economics & Cost Benefit Analysis • Economics of Technology and Internet	• Individual Study in International Economics and Finance • http://www.econ.chula.ac.th/programme/inter/pub/Outline_2942710_SpecTopProf-Jansen.htm and Section 2 • International Banking and Financial Markets • International Business Economics • Law for International Economics and Finance • Political Economy of International Relations • Econometrics • Firms in the International Economy • Government's Business in International Economics and Finance

	• Model Building in Operational Research • Monetary Economich • Operational Research Methods • Philosophy of Economics • Political Economy • Politics of International Economics Relations • Public Economics • Principles of Finance • Problems of Applied Econometrics • The Economics History of North America orCorporate Finance, Investments and Financial Markets • The Integration of Europe's Economy 1815-1990 • Theories of Regional Development and Change • Quantitative Finance	• Economics of the Environment • Economy of Modern China I and II • Environmental Economics • European Economics History • European Economics Integration • Evolution of Economics Thought & Analysis • Experimental Economics • Financial Anomalies & Behavioural Finance • Financial Econometrics • Financial Economics I and II • Financial Markets & Portfolio Business Management • Game Theory & Applications to Economics • Global Economics Dimensions of Singapore • Growth Theory • Health Economics and Policy • Health Economics I and II • Income Distribution Analysis • Industrial Organisation • Industrial Organisation I and II • International Economics I and II • International Finance • International Trade • International Trade and Finance • Labour Economics • Labour Economics I and II	

UNIVERSITY	LSE, UK	NUS, SINGAPORE	UNIVERSITY OF CHULALONGKORN
Elective		• Maritime and Shipping Economics • Mathematical Economics • Mathematical Economics I and II • Money and Banking • Money and Banking I and II • Open Economy MacroEconomics • Organisation, Markets and Governance • Policy Issues of Singapore Economy • Political Economy of Globalisation I • Population Economics • Project & Policy Evaluation • Public Economics • Public Finance • Resource and Energy Economics I and II • Technology and Innovation • The Asian Newly Industrialised Economies • The Modern Chinese Economy • The Singapore Economy • Time Series Analysis • Topics in Econometrics • Transport Economics I and II • Urban Economics	

APPENDIX 2

TABLE 3.2. Detailed courses offered for Bachelor of Economics

UNIVERSITY	UM	UPM	UMS
Programme	Bachelor of Economics	Bachelor of Economics	Bachelor of Economics
Length	3 years	3 years	3 years
Specialisation	None	• Financial Economics • International Trade and Finance • Business Economics • Public Finance • Development Economics • Resource and Environmental Economics • Industrial Economics • Recreation and Hospitality Business Management	• Planning and Development Economics • Financial Economics • Human Resource Economics
University Core	• Information Skills • Islamic Civilizations and Asian Civilizations • Ethnic Relations • Basic Entrepreneurship Culture • Introduction to Malaysia • English Courses	• Islamic Civilization and Asian Civilization • Ethics Relations • Nationhood Studies • Agriculture and Man • Introductory Sociology and Anthropology • Ethics and Value in Development • Skills in Grammar • Writing for Academic Purposes	• Ethnic Relations • Islamic Civilizations and Asian Civilizations • Basic Entrepreneurship Culture • Negotiations Skills • Ethics for Professional • Personal Financial Business Management • Communicative English Grammar • Oral Communication in English • Reading and Writing in English • Academic Reading and Writing • English for Career Development • Co-curriculum

UNIVERSITY	UM	UPM	UMS
Faculty Core	• Introduction to Political Science • Introduction to Public Administration • Introduction to Financial Business Management • Introduction to Law • Research Methodology • Sociology	• Statistics for Applied Science • Introductory to Business and Mathematic Economics • Information Technology and it's Usage • Introductory Accounting • Organisation and Business Business Management	• MicroEconomics • Business Management Principles and Practices • Principles of Accounting • Principles of Financial Business Management • MacroEconomics • Mathematical Economics • Principles of Entrepreneurship • Statistics for Business and Economics • Basic Econometrics • MicroEconomics II • International Economics • Research Methodology • MacroEconomics II • Introduction to Mgmt Information System • Business Management Accounting • Corporate Communication • Principles of Marketing
Programme Core	• MicroEconomics I-III • Economics Development • Malaysian Economy • MacroEconomics • History of Economics Thought • Quantitative Analysis • Statistics I-II	• Computer Programmingmeming I • Principle of MicroEconomics • Principle of MacroEconomics • MicroEconomics I-II • MacroEconomics I-II • History of Economics Thoughts • Statistics for Economics and Business • Mathematical Economics	•Planning and Development Economics • Planning Economics • Agriculture and Resource Economics • Project Planning and Appraisal • Fiscal Economics • Corporate Financial Economics • Development Economics I • Development Economics II

	• Introduction to Mathematical Economics • Basic Econometrics • Industrial Training • Graduation Exercise	• Money and Banking • Malaysian Economy • Econometrics • Research methodology • International Economics • Public Financing I	• Issues of Malaysian Economy • Environmental Economics • Industrial Economics • Islamic Financial Economics 1. FINANCIAL ECONOMICS • Statistical Analysis of Economics • Financial Economics I • Fiscal Economics • Monetary Economics • International Financial Economics • Financial Economics II • Applied Financial Econometrics • Money and Banking • Islamic Financial Economics • Financial Economics Seminar • Offshore Financial Economics 2. HUMAN RESOURCE ECONOMICS • Human Resource Economics I • Human Resource Economics II • Human Capital • Industrial Relations • Health Economics • International Human Resource Economics • Labour in Islam • Gender in Labour Market • Selected Topics in Labour Economics • Applied Human Resource Economics • Personnel Economics

UNIVERSITY	UM	UPM	UMS
Elective	• Monetary & Financial Economics • International Economics • Labour Economics • Resource and Environmental Economics • Enterprise Development • Development Studies • Public Administration • Human Resource Business Management • Political Economy • Applied Statistics	From any one chosen specialisation	• Corporate Financial Economics • Development Economics I • Issues of Malaysian Economy • Environmental Economics • Industrial Economics • Human Resource Economics I • Gender and Labor Market • Applied Human Resource Economics • Personnel Economics • Health Economics • Financial Economics I • Monetary Economics • Money and Banking • Islamic Finance Economics • Offshore Financial Economics • Fiscal Economics
Industrial Training	Yes	None	Industrial Training or Academic Exercise
Total Credit Hours	107	105	122

UNIVERSITY	UUM	UIAM	UNIMAS
Programme	Bachelor of Economics	Bachelor of Economics	Bachelor of Economics
Length	3 years	4 years	3 years
Specialisation	None	None	• International Economics • Industrial Economics
University Courses	• Islamic and Asian Civilization 1-2 • Malaysian Studies • Communication I-II • English for Higher Education • Foundation of Entrepreneurship • Co-curriculum	• The Islamic Worldview • Islam, Knowledge & Civilization • Ethics & Fiqh for Everyday Life • Studies of Religion I • Methods of Da'awah • Business Ethics • Languages • Co-curriculum	• Islamic and Asian Civilization • Information Tech tools for Knowledge Workers • Ethnic Relations
Faculty Core	• Economics Theory • Complementary Economics • Quantitative and Research Skills • Social Science, Business Management, and Information Technology) • Language and Communication Skills	• Statistical Methods • Business Mathematics • Principles of MicroEconomics • Principles of MacroEconomics • Foundation of Islamic Economics • Principles & Practice of Business Management • Information Technology • Financial Accounting Fundamentals • Business Management Accounting Fundamentals • Fiqh for Economists I • Fiqh for Economists II • Language for Occupational Purposes	• Principles of Economics • Principles of Business Management • Accounting • Business Communication I • Statistics for Economics and Business • Research methodology for Economics & Business • Business Law

UNIVERSITY	UUM	UIAM	UNIMAS
Core courses	• International Trade • Industrial Economics • Development Economics • Natural Resource Economics • Monetary Economics • Public Economics • Agricultural Economics	• Intermediate MicroEconomics I and II • Intermediate MacroEconomics I and II • Malaysian Economy • Econometrics I • Money & Banking • Islamic Banking & Finance • Public Finance • Usul Fiqh I and II • History of Islamic Economics Thought	
Elective	2 courses offered by the Faculty of Economics and a group course (practical/academic research)	Packages offered • Finance Package • International Package • Development Package • Islamic Economics Package	From other faculties
Industrial Training	None	None	Yes
Total Credit Hours	120	128	120

TABLE 3.3. Detailed courses offered for Bachelor of Business Management (BBA)

UNIVERSITY	UM	UKM	UPM	UUM
Programme	BBA	BBA	BBA	BBA
Length	3 years	3 years	3 years	3 years
Specialisation	• Business Management • Marketing • Finance & Banking		• Marketing • Human Resource Business Management • Finance • International Business • Entrepreneurship • Business law • Property Business Management • Hospitality and Recreation Business Management	
University Courses	• Information Skills • Ethnic Relations or Introduction to Malaysia • The Basic Culture of Entrepreneurship • English Language Course • Islamic and Asian Civilisations	• Islamic and Asian Civilizations • Business from an Islamic Perspective • General Study Course • Co-curriculum	• Nationhood Studies • Islamic and Asian Civilization • Ethnic Relations • Writing for Academic Purposes • Agriculture and Human • Introductory Psychology • Introductory for Economics Mathematics and Business	• Islamic and Asian Civilizations • Ethnic Relationships • Nationhood of Malaysia • English for Communication I • English for Communication II • Process Writing • Fundamentals of Entrepreneurship • Co-curriculum

UNIVERSITY	UM	UKM	UPM	UUM
Faculty Core	• Introductory Accounting • Business Communication • Managerial Economics I • Managerial Economics II • Business Statistics • Quantitative Analysis for Business • Critical Thinking • Business Research • Business Law • Business Ethics • Principles of Marketing	• MicroEconomics • MacroEconomics • Principles of Accounting • Mathematics for Economics and Business • Fundamentals of Business Management • Computer Application • Entrepreneurship • Statistics for Economics and Business • English for Business • Speech Communication	• Introductory Accounting • Costing and Mgmt Accounting • Intermediate Financial Accounting • Principles of Economics • MicroEconomics • MacroEconomics • Organisation Mgmt. and Bus. • Organisation Behavior • Computers and Data Procs. • Quantitative Technique in Mgmt • Business Statistics • Commercial Law • Corporate Social Policy • Business Communication	• Theory of Islamic Business and Practice • Public Speaking or Business Report Writing • Malay Language for Mgmt • principal of Economics • Ethic and Scientific Thinking • Financial Business Management I • Financial Business Management II • Business and Professional Communication • Introduction to Statistic • Mathematics for Business Management • Applied Statistics • Business Accounting
Core courses	• Business Management • Business Management Information Systems • Human Resource Business Management • Corporate Finance • International Business Business Management • Business Management Accounting • Strategic Business Management	• Managerial Accounting • Business Law • Information Technology Mgmt • Business Communication • International Bussines • Principles of Corp. Finance • Ethics and Corp. Social Responsibility • Fundamentals of Marketing	• Principles of Marketing • Business Research Methods • Current Issues in Business Management • Strategic Business Management • Operations Business Management • Business Management Information Systems I • Project Paper or Case Study	• Introduction to Marketing • Marketing Business Management • Introduction to Business Management • Organisational Behavior • Human Resource Business Management • International Business • Strategic Business Management

	• Financial Business Management • Production Business Management • Industrial Training	• Principles of Financial Mgmt • Operation Business Management • Marketing Mgmt and Strategy • Organisational Behaviour • Strategic Business Management • International Trade Economics • International Marketing • International Finance • Global Business Management • Foreign Language • Industrial training		• Business Management Information System • Production and Operations Business Management • Entrepreneurship • Business Management Ethics • Research Methodology • Introduction to Social Science • Information System in Organisations • Computer Application in Mgmt • Business Law • Company Law • Industrial training
Elective	Choose 2 courses offered by the department of: • Business Policy and Strategy • Marketing • Finance and Banking • Mgmt Accounting & Taxation • Operations and Mgmt Information Systems	2 elective courses – 6 units may be taken from other courses selected by students	And any 5 courses from the following specialisation • Human Resource Mgmt • Marketing • Finance • International Business Management • Entrepreneurship • Business Law • Property Business Management • Hospitality and Recreation Mgmt	University Electives and courses from any chosen minor : • General Business Management • Marketing • Transport Business Management • Production and Operation Mgmt • Entrepreneurship • Muamalat Administration
Industrial Training	Yes	Yes	None	Yes
Total Credit Hours	107	120	106	128

UNIVERSITY	UIAM	UNIMAS	UiTM
Programme	BBA	BBA	-
Length	3 years	3 years	3 years
Specialisation	None	Marketing	None
University Courses	• The Islamic Worldview • Islam, Knowledge & Civilization • Ethics & Fiqh for Everyday Life • Studies of Religion I • Methods of Da'awah • Business Ethics • Languages • Co-curriculum	• Islamic and Asian Civilization • Info. Tech tools for Knowledge Workers • Ethnic Relations	• English • Co-curriculum • Third Language • The Job Application Process • Tamadun Islam dan Asia Tenggara
Faculty Core	• Statistical Methods • Business Mathematics • Principles of MicroEconomics • Principles of MacroEconomics • Foundation of Islamic Economics • Principles & Practice of Mgmt • Information Technology • Fin. Accounting Fundamentals • Mgnt Accounting Fundamentals • Fiqh for Economists I and II • Language for Occupational Purposes	• Principles of Economics • Principles of Business Management • Accounting • Business Communication I • Statistics for Economics and Business • Res. Methodology for Economics & Bus. • Business Law • Business Communication II • Business Mathematics • Industrial Training • Final Year Project I-II	• Business Law • Economics • Information Tech. In Business • Financial Accounting • Financial Business Management • Principles & Practice of Marketing • Principles & Practice of Business Management • Quantitative for Business Analysis • Managerial Economics • Strategic Business Management • Research Methodology

Core course	• Organisational Behavior • Decision Science • Human Resource Business Management • Strategic Business Management • Financial Business Management I-II • Marketing Principles • Business Management Information Systems • Cost and Business Management Accounting • Malaysian Business Law • Managerial Economics	• Principles of Marketing • Organisational Behaviour • Information Systems and Bus. Organisation • Consumer Behaviour • Managerial Accounting • Financial Business Management • Pricing Strategy • Relational Marketing • Product Development Strategy • Business Management Science • Human Resource Business Management • Strategic Marketing • Promotion • Distribution • Marketing Seminar	• MicroEconomics Analysis • Statistical Methods • Asia Pacific Economies • Environmental Economics • Econometrics • Practicum/Project Paper
Elective	• 13 elective (choose 2 from each any 4 areas listed below, and 5 other courses from any other departmental electives) • Finance Courses • Information Technology Courses • General Business Management Courses • Marketing Courses • Other Electives	• 6 electives	Choose 7 courses from: • Introduction to Operations Mgmt • Introduction to HRM • Investment Analysis • Concepts and Practice of Retailing • Organisational Behaviour • Risk and Insurance • Money & Banking • Heath Economics • E-business • Islamic Economics & Globalisation • Understanding Consumer • Fiqh Muamalat • Industrial Economics • Public Finance
Industrial Training	Yes	Yes	None
Total Credit Hours	128	120	103

APPENDIX 3

a) B.A (Economics and Business Management) Oxford University

1ST YEAR	2ND AND 3RD YEAR
COURSES Three courses are taken: • Introductory Economics •Introduction to Business Management • Financial Business Management	COURSES Compulsory core courses: • MicroEconomics •MacroEconomics •Quantitative Economics Optional courses, of which at least 2 must be in Business Management. Choose from over 20 option papers including: •Strategic Business Management •Finance • Organizational behavior •Marketing •Economics of industry •International Economics •Developmental Economics

b) B.A (Economics) Cambridge University

YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3
Part 1 provides an introduction to the subject: a common core of knowledge which can subsequently be extended. There are 5 compulsory papers: 1. MicroEconomics 2. MacroEconomics 3. Quantitative Methods 4. Politics 5. British Economics History	Part IIA has 3 compulsory papers (MicroEconomics, MacroEconomics, Econometrics) and 1 optional paper chosen from Development, Sociology, or Mathematics.	Final year consist of 3 compulsory papers (MicroEconomics and MacroEconomics), 2 Optional papers, and a compulsory dissertation

c) B.A (Business Management Studies) Cambridge University

CORE COURSES	OPTIONAL PAPERS
Six main areas of study 1. Business and Business Management Economics 2. Human Resource and Organizations 3. Operations and Information Systems 4. Strategy and Marketing 5. Finance and Accounting 6. Business Management Science *One core paper will be taken from each of these six areas. Negotiations Workshop-2nd term Project-3rd term	Two of the six core areas are chosen as optional papers

d) B.A Programme Princeton University

1ST YEAR	2ND, 3RD, 4TH YEAR
General requirements: • Writing Seminar • Foreign Language • Epistemology and Cognition •Ethical Thought and Moral values •Historical Analysis •Literature and the Arts •Quantitative Reasoning •Science Technology, with Laboratory •Social Analysis	**Core:** •MicroEconomics, MacroEconomics, Econometrics **Electives:** • 5 other departmentals Junior Independent Work Senior Thesis Senior Comprehensive exam

e) B.A (Economics) Harvard University

GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS	CONCENTRATION
Complete 1 graded course in each of the eight categories: 1. Aesthetic and Interpretive Understanding 2. Culture and Belief 3. Empirical and Mathematical Reasoning 4. Ethical Reasoning 5. Science of Living Systems 6. Science of the Physical Universe 7. Societies of the World 8. United States of the World	**Required Course (10 half courses)** 1. Social Analysis 2. Economics 970 3. Statistics 100,104, or 110; or Math 191 4. Economics 1010a or 1011a 5. Economics 1010b or 1011b 6. Economics 1123 or 1126 7. Three additional half-courses in Economics that include**:** i. One half-course that satisfies the writing requirement (see item 6a) ii. One half-course that has Economics 1010a, 1010b, 1011a, or 1011b as prerequisite. Tutorials • Sophomore • Theory Review

f) Bachelor of Commerce University of Melbourne

FIRST YEAR	Introductory MacroEconomics Introductory MicroEconomics Quantitative Methods 1
SECOND YEAR	Organisational Behaviour Intermediate MacroEconomics Intermediate MicroEconomics Introductory Econometrics or Quantitative Methods 2
THIRD YEAR	MacroEconomics MicroEconomics Basic Economics or Econometrics

g) Bachelor of Economics Monash University

COURSE DETAILS

Core Courses (6 units):
Principles of
1.Economics microEconomics
2. Principles of macroEconomics
3.Business and Economics statistic
4.Data modelling and computing
5. Intermediate microEconomics
6. Intermediate macroEconomics

Major (8 Units) from one:
- Econometrics and Business Statistics

Electives:
1. 8 open electives – from any disciplines offered by any faculty or the Faculty of Business and Economics Programmes
   - geography and environmental science
   - history
   - politics
   - mathematics
   - sociology
   - philosophy
   - languages

2. 2 units from Faculty in the Bachelor of Economics

APPENDIX 4

MAIN JOB CLASSIFICATIONS

MAIN JOB CATEGORIES	CODE
Legislator, Senior Official & Managers	01
Professionals	02
Technician and Associated Professionals	03
Clerical workers	04
Services, shop & market sales workers	05
Skilled Agricultural & Fishery workers	06
Crafts & related trade workers	07
Plants & machine operators and assemblers	08
Elementary occupations	09
Others	(06,07,08 & 09)

Note:

1 Include general managers, department managers and senior government officials

2 Include graduate teaching professionals, accountant, auditors, computer system designers & analysts

3 Include non-graduates teachers, supervisors, air traffic & transport controllers

4 Include administrative clerks, accounting, finance clerks & telephone operators

5 Include chef, tourist guide and restaurant waiter/waitress

6 Include farm workers, plantation workers & forestry workers

7 Include fitters, carpenters and tailors

8 Include equipment assemblers, drivers and machine operators

9 Including street vendors, domestic helpers & cleaners and construction and maintenance labourers

APPENDIX 5

Attendees of the Focus Group

1. Ms. Noor Mazliana Mohan of CIMB Bank
2. Mr. Gurbachan Singh of Panasonic Malaysia
3. Dr. Ong Seng Fook of ACCCIM (Associated Chinese Chamber of Commerce)
4. Ms. Poh Wan Kh'ng (Secretary of Dr. Ong)
5. En. Nordin bin mat Jali of Persatuan Pengguna Islam Malaysia (PPIM)
6. En. Abdullah Munshi of PETRONAS
7. En. Rajini Ramlan of DPMM (Malay Chamber of Commerce)

Focus Group Discussion

1. Do you employ Economics/Business Management graduates in your company?
2. What sections are they placed?
3. What are they types of skills you are looking for when you employ?
4. What are their strengths? What are their weaknesses?
5. Are you happy with their performance so far?
6. Do you think that the curriculum and syllabus at local IPTAs are suitable to produce such workforce in the future?
7. Any comments about graduates of local versus foreign universities?
8. Does your company offer scholarships to undergraduate students? How much do you spend on staff training?
9. What do you foresee to be the critical skills in the future?